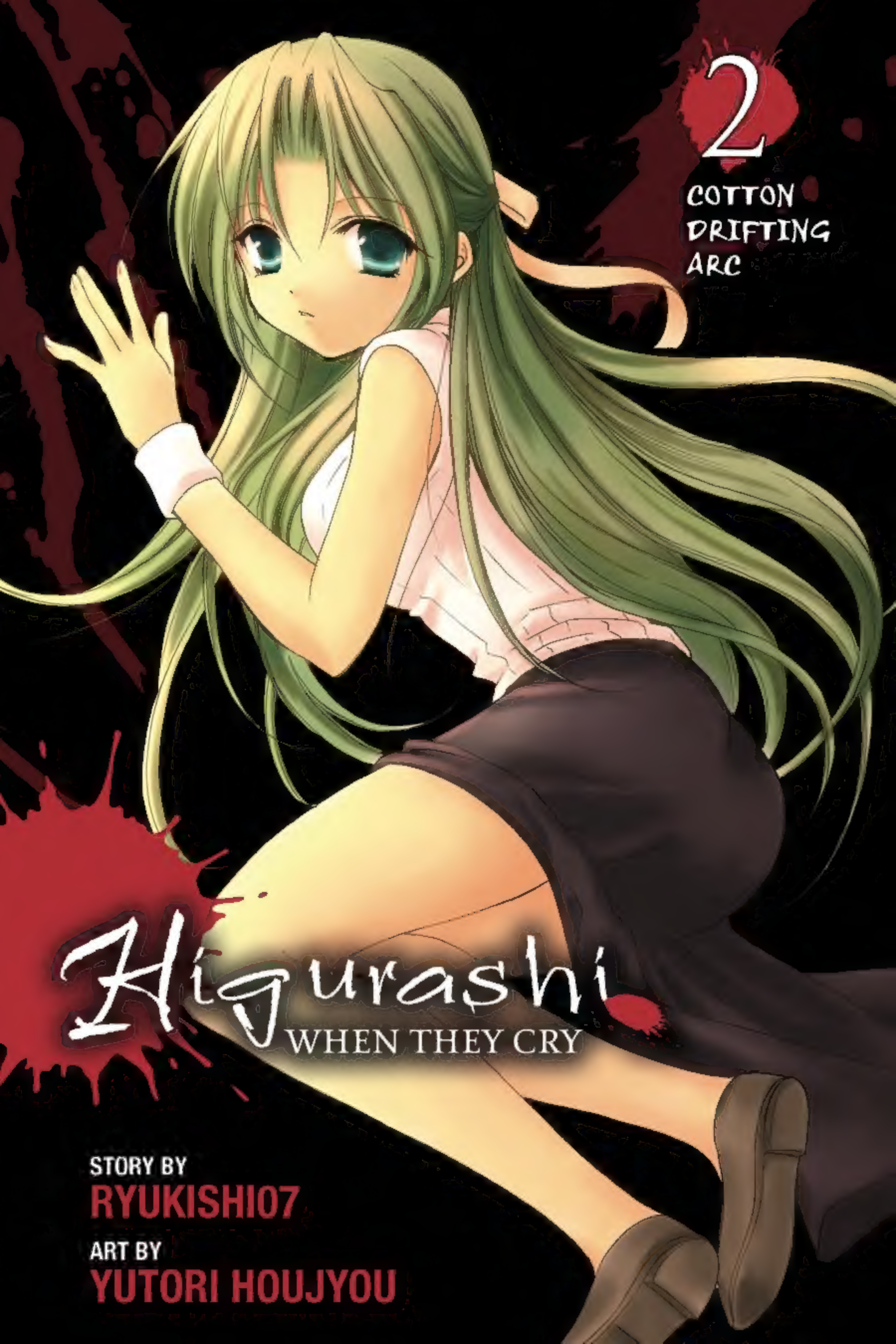
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COTTON
DRIFTING
ARC
Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
STORY BY
RYUKISHI07
ART BY
YUTORI HOUJYOU

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
COTTON DRIFTING ARC

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY
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CHAPTER 6
THE SAIGUDEN

1979: DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT DIRECTOR DISMEMBERMENT

THE SUSPECTS WERE SIX OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WORKING UNDER THE VICTIM. AN ARGUMENT TURNED INTO A BRAWL, AND THEY ASSAULTED THE VICTIM AS A GROUP. AFTER THE MURDER, THEY CUT UP THE BODY. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFENDERS IS STILL AT LARGE.

THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN HINAMIZAWA VILLAGE...

...STRANGE DEATHS THAT OCCUR EVERY YEAR ON THE DAY OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

1981: STRANGE DEATHS OF PRIEST AND WIFE

THE PRIEST AT FURUDE SHRINE DIED SUDDENLY OF A STRANGE ILLNESS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN. IMMEDIATELY AFTER, HIS WIFE LEFT A WILL AND WENT MISSING. THE WILL SUGGESTS SUICIDE. ONIGAFUCHI SWAMP IS SAID TO BE BOTTOMLESS; HER BODY WAS NOT FOUND.

1982: HOUSEWIFE BEATEN TO DEATH

THE KILLER WAS AN OPIUM ADDICT. HE WAS APPREHENDED BUT DIED IN PRISON. A FEW DAYS AFTER THE INCIDENT, THE VICTIM'S NEPHEW MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED.

1980: COUPLE FALLS AT SHIRAKAWA PARK

A COUPLE WHO HAD SUPPORTED THE HINAMIZAWA DAM PROJECT FELL FROM A VIEWING PLATFORM INSIDE THE PARK TO THE RIVER BELOW. THE HUSBAND IS DEAD; THE WIFE IS MISSING. THE POLICE HAVE CLASSIFIED IT AS AN ACCIDENT.

AND THIS YEAR ...

...THE COT-TON DRIFT-ING COMES ALONG AGAIN !!

DO-DON (PO-POUND)

DON

I CAN'T SEE RIKA-CHAN!

UGH, DAMMIT!

TON TON (PAT PAT)

NN? WHAT? ARE YOU SAYING WE CAN SEE BETTER FROM THERE?

SHION!?

GOOD EVENING, KEI-CHAN!

THERE!

SHION! HOW FAR ARE WE GOING? WE'RE GETTING REALLY FAR AWAY!

TATATA (DASH)

AHH

WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN.

A LOVER'S RENDEZVOUS ...?

UGH. I'M GOING BACK.

HUH? YOU WANTED TO SEE RIKA-CHAMA'S PERFORM-ANCE?

ERK, NO! WHAT ABOUT RIKA-CHAN'S PERFORM-ANCE!!?

I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT SOMETHING WAS FISHY WITH THEM.

SO THAT'S THEIR RELATION-SHIP...

oooooooo

CAN'T UNDER-ESTIMATE YOU, KEIICHI-KUN.

HMM, I NEVER THOUGHT YOU TWO WERE THAT CLOSE.

HEE-HEE-HEE. PLEASE, DON'T LET US BOTHER YOU.

OH MY, MY.

UUU-WAAAH !!!

あらら

くすくす KUSU KUSU (GIGGLE)

ZUZA! (SKID)

IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT. TAKANO-SAN JUST ASKED ME TO MESS WITH THE STOREHOUSE LOCK A LITTLE...

はは HA HA HA

WH-WHAT!? YOU'RE THE ONES HAVING A RENDEZVOUS!

oooooooo

oooooooo

KUSU

NO, I MEAN, SHE SAID SHE WANTS TO SEE INSIDE!

MESS WITH THE LOCK? ARE YOU THIEVES !?

THIS IS CALLED THE "SEALED SAIGUDEN."

IT'S THE TEMPLE THAT ENSHRINES THE SAIGU, THE PROPS USED IN CEREMONIES.

IT'S SACRED GROUND.

BECAUSE ANYONE OUTSIDE THE FURUDE FAMILY WOULD BRING IN IMPURITIES, IT'S A PROHIBITED AREA THAT NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO ENTER.

I'M NOT FROM THIS VILLAGE.

BUT I'M RESEARCHING HINAMIZAWA'S OLD STORIES AND LEGENDS. IT'S A HOBBY OF MINE.

HEE HEE HEE.

SACRED GROUND!? WOULDN'T IT BE BAD TO JUST BARGE IN TO A PLACE LIKE THAT?

IT'S TRUE THAT TODAY, THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL, ALL EYES ARE ON THE PERFORMANCE ON THE GROUNDS.

A CHANCE, HUH?

WELL? SINCE YOU'RE HERE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME IN WITH US?

EH?

I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR MY CHANCE TO GET IN HERE TODAY.

THIS PLACE IS PACKED WITH ANSWERS TO MY INTELLEC-TUAL CURIOSITY.

WHAT!? I DON'T THINK SO!

SOUNDS FUN! LET'S TAKE A LOOK!

SHION !!

IT'S A SACRED STORE-HOUSE, ISN'T IT?

BUT THIS IS DEFINITELY A BAD IDEA!

KUSU (SNICKER)

WHA!?

OHHHH? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE SCARED, KEI-CHAN?

HRMM, WELL...

IT COULD BE PRETTY INTERESTING FOR A YOUNG KID LIKE YOU.

I'LL BE KEEPING WATCH OUT HERE, SO YOU GO TAKE A LOOK WITH THEM.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

JUST A LITTLE! IF THERE'S NOTHING INTERESTING, WE'RE GETTING RIGHT OUT.

GIIII
(CREEEEAK)

UWAH!

OYASHIRO-SAMA.

THAT'S HINAMIZAWA'S GUARDIAN DEITY.

...AND TO HAVE PUT A CURSE ON THOSE WHO TRIED TO DEFILE THE LAND WITH THE DAM PROJECT, ONE AFTER ANOTHER...

SAID TO PROTECT HINAMIZAWA FROM OUTSIDE IMPURITIES...

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND WHAT THESE PROPS ARE, MAEBARA-KUN...

EH? AH, NO.

THEY LOOK MORE LIKE CARPEN-TRY TOOLS THAN CERE-MONY PROPS.

WH-WHAT IS THAT...?

THERE ARE A LOT MORE SAIGU IN HERE THAN I IMAGINED.

FROM ONCE UPON A TIME...

...WHEN HINAMIZAWA VILLAGE WAS STILL CALLED ONIGAFUCHI VILLAGE...

THEN FOR YOU, MAEBARA-KUN...

...WHY DON'T I TELL YOU A STORY FROM LONG AGO?

IT WAS SAID THAT THEY LIVED QUIETLY, AS IF IN HIDING, WHILE THE PEOPLE AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN REVERED THEM.

THIS IS THE OLD

TOGETHER WITH

THE BOTTOM OF THE EARTH.

NOW THIS IS WHERE IT GETS INTERESTING.

"AND THEY LIVED IN HARMONY WITH THE DEMONS"? THAT'S A WEIRD STORY.

HEE HEE HEE. ISN'T IT?

BALL (TURN)

PIKU (TWITCH)

WH-WHAT, SHION!?

EH...? UH...

SFX: DOKI (BADUM) DOKI

I'M SORRY. PLEASE, DON'T MIND ME.

MAY I CON-TINUE?

ACTUALLY, THE DEMONS THAT ATTACKED THE VILLAGE ...

...WEREN'T ANY ORDINARY DEMONS.

THEY WERE "MAN-EATING DEMONS"...!

THE BLOOD OF THOSE MAN-EATING DEMONS FLOWED STRONG IN THE VEINS OF THOSE VILLAGERS.

AND SOMETIMES THAT BLOOD WOULD AWAKEN FROM ITS SLEEP.

ONCE EVERY FEW DECADES OR SO, THEY WOULD BE OVERCOME WITH THE DESIRE TO EAT HUMANS.

WHEN THAT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD ADVANCE ON THE VILLAGES AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN AND TAKE A SACRIFICE.

THE VILLAGERS AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN FEARED THESE DEMON ABDUC-TIONS...

...AND CALLED THEM "DEMONED AWAY."

WH-WHAT THE...

THEN ...

OF COURSE OYASHIRO-SAMA KNEW ABOUT IT.

WHAT ABOUT OYASHIRO-SAMA!? DIDN'T OYASHIRO-SAMA STAY IN THE VILLAGE AND WATCH OVER THE PEOPLE!?

THEN THEY'RE NO DIFFERENT THAN DEMONS!?

THAT'S WHY APPARENTLY THEY NEVER "DEMONED AWAY" ANYONE...

...BUT THE SACRIFICE OYASHIRO-SAMA HAD APPOINTED.

THIS IS THE END OF THE STORY OF THE VILLAGE THAT COEXISTED WITH DEMONS...?

THAT'S TOO CRUEL...

AND THEY SAY THAT ON THE NIGHT THEY TOOK THEIR SACRIFICE, SO THAT THEY COULD ENJOY EATING THEIR VICTIM TO THE FULLEST...

...THEY STARTED THE "COTTON DRIFTING" CEREMONY.

COTTON DRIFTING?

TONIGHT'S FESTIVAL IS A "COTTON DRIFTING"...

KEI-CHAN, DOESN'T "WATA" MEAN BOTH COTTON...

...AND "EN-TRAILS"...?

THE COTTON DRIFTING? ISN'T THAT...

...THE FESTIVAL WHEN THEY HOLD A SERVICE FOR A FUTON?

WATA...?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, YEAH... LIKE FISH ENTRAILS ARE WATA...

EH...?

THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S JUST LIKE YOU'RE IMAGINING, MAEBARA-KUN...

NOW THE "COTTON DRIFTING" IS NO MORE THAN A SUMMER FESTIVAL HELD EVERY JUNE, BUT IT WASN'T ALWAYS THAT WAY.

IT WAS A GHASTLY, MAN-EATING BANQUET...!!

ENTRAILS...

DRIFTING...?

EVERYONE PICKS APART THE "COTTON" AND SETS IT ADRIFT IN THE SWAMP.

THAT'S !!

THAT'S ...

GUWA (YANK)

BIRIIII (RRRRRIP)

SHE TEARS THE FUTON OPEN WITH THE RITUAL HOE...

...AND PULLS OUT THE "COTTON" INSIDE.

TRY IMAGINING... RIKA-CHAN'S DANCE OFFERING.

DOKUN B-DMP

A FUTON STUFFED WITH COTTON...!?

Y- YOU'RE LYING!!

THEY SAY THAT THE COTTON DRIFTING IS A CEREMONY THAT PURIFIES A FUTON, DON'T THEY?

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THE SIG-NIFICANCE IS TO A "FUTON STUFFED WITH COTTON"?

THESE ARE N'T CARPENTRY TOOLS!

THESE TOOLS WITH THEIR WARPED SHAPES...

...ARE TOOLS FOR KILLING PEOPLE!

URK...

CRUEL EXECUTIONERS' TOOLS FOR CUTTING, TEARING, BOILING, BAKING, AND GRINDING HUMAN BEINGS!

WHAT THESE TOOLS KEPT IN THE SAIGUDEN ARE FOR...

NOW THAT I'VE TOLD YOU THIS, YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?

YES...A FUTON STUFFED WITH COTTON REPRESENTS A "HUMAN"...!

AND THAT HOE IS A DISSECTION TOOL FOR TEARING OPEN A PERSON'S BELLY!

HUH!? IS THAT A PERSON IN THERE!? A PERSON!? A MUMMY!?

EH!?

AH.

EEEHH?

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING EITHER. MAYBE YOU SAW SOMETHING ELSE?

Y-YOU THINK SO...?

NOW DO YOU BELIEVE, MAEBARA-KUN...?

WH-WHERE? I DON'T SEE ANYTHING...

IT DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PEOPLE IN HINAMIZAWA NOW, DOES IT...?

BUT... THAT WAS A REALLY LONG TIME AGO.

YOU REALLY DO LOVE HINAMIZAWA, DON'T YOU, MAEBARA-KUN?

SFX: KUSU (SNICKER)

BUT WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THAT CUSTOM MIGHT STILL CONTINUE EVEN TODAY?

EH!?

HEE-HEE. LOOK AT THIS ARTICLE.

IN THE COUNTLESS DREADFUL CEREMONIES HANDED DOWN IN HINAMIZAWA...!?

AROUND THE END OF THE MEIJI ERA, A BODY WAS FOUND BRUTALLY MURDERED IN HINAMIZAWA... FORMERLY KNOWN AS ONIGAFUCHI VILLAGE.

IT'S SAID THAT MAYBE THE DREADFUL CUSTOMS OF ONIGAFUCHI REMAINED UNTIL AROUND THE EARLY SHOUWA ERA.

THIS IS A SECRET, UNDERSTAND? I TOLD SHION-CHAN BECAUSE I KNEW SHE'D UNDERSTAND.

BUT YOU DON'T TELL ANYONE, EITHER, MAEBARA-KUN...

IF YOU DO...

SU... (REACH...)

...I MIGHT MEET WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE OR BE MADE INTO A SACRIFICE.

KIIII (CREEEEAK)

キィィ

(CREEEEAK)

HA! (GASP!)

TOMITAKE-SAN!

AH-HA-HA! DID I SCARE YOU?

I HEARD NOISES, LIKE SOMETHING WAS JUMPING UP AND DOWN.

SO I GOT WORRIED. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE BROKEN SOMETHING...

GACHA (CLANK)

OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

KEI-CHAN, ONEE MIGHT BE LOOKING FOR YOU, SO GO SEE HER.

IF MY JEALOUS SISTER FINDS OUT I HAD YOU ALL TO MYSELF, I'LL BE IN BIG TROUBLE.

DON'T TELL ANYONE WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT.

AH-HA-HA... THAT KINDA WORE ME OUT.

ME TOO...

IT MIGHT HAPPEN TONIGHT— "OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE."

WE FOUR ARE THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATES TO BE ITS VICTIMS.

THAT'S NOT ALL THAT I MEANT.

KAAA (BLUUUSH)

DON'T SAY IT LIKE THAT! YOU'RE GIVING PEOPLE THE WRONG IDEA!

IF YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT WE DID TONIGHT, IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT WE'D KEEP IT SECRET.

STILL, I REALLY WONDER...

...WHAT WAS THAT SOUND...?

AH HA HA...

JUST KIDDING! AH-HA-HA!

OH. SHE WAS JOKING.

YOU KNOW, THAT THUMPING. DIDN'T YOU HEAR IT? IT WAS SO...

THAT SOUND.

EH? WHAT SOUND?

...LOUD...

EH?

HUH...? IT DIDN'T BOTHER YOU?

I'M SORRY, SHION.

WHAT WAS SO LOUD...?

ZAAAAAA (WHOOOOSH)

YOU STOP JOKING, KEI-CHAN.

IT REALLY, TRULY DIDN'T BOTHER YOU?

SHION... WILL YOU EXPLAIN FROM THE BEGIN-NING...? NO JOKES ...

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A SOUND?

LET IT BOTHER YOU? WHEN DID YOU HEAR THIS SOUND?

IT WAS A THUMP THUMP...

...LIKE A CHILD JUMPING UP AND DOWN ON A WOODEN FLOOR SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...

ZAAAAA

I-I'M ASKING YOU ONE MORE TIME...

WAIT, KEI-CHAN. ARE YOU SERIOUS?

IT DIDN'T SEEM TO BOTHER YOU OR TAKANO-SAN, SO I DIDN'T LET IT BOTHER ME EITHER, BUT...

...WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THERE WAS A NOISE...?

GOKU (GULP)

AH

HA
HA

WHA?

WELL, I'M OFF.

WHAAA? WHAT THE HECK?

I'M KIDDING! KIDDING!

AH-HA-HA! YOU FELL FOR IT!

A SOUND?

M-MAN, WHAT WAS THAT...?

I HEARD NOISES, LIKE SOMETHING WAS JUMPING UP AND DOWN.

...A SOUND...

...HEARD...

TOMITAKE-SAN...

SFX: NIPA (BEAM)

...RIKA-CHAN...

WHOA!

KEIICHI! I FOUND YOU! SIR!

NOW WE JUST NEED SATOKO-CHAN.

KEI-CHAN! WE FINALLY FOUND YOU!

DON (WHAM)

H-HE'S RIGHT! THAT DOESN'T COUNT AS A MISTAKE!

MEWWW

SHUN (GLOOMY)

CRAP!

EH? YEAH, YOU DID GOOD! NOT ONE MISTAKE!

DID YOU WATCH MY DANCE OFFERING, KEIICHI?

GIKU (GULP)

Y-YEAH.

GUI (TUG)

KEI-CHAN, LET'S GO TO THE COTTON DRIFTING! IF WE DON'T HURRY, WE'LL MISS IT!

THEN...

...THERE REALLY WAS...

...A SOUND...?

YOU DIDN'T SEE SHION, DID YOU?

OH YEAH, KEI-CHAN...

EH...?

UH... I DON'T KNOW. I MIGHT HAVE SEEN HER...

BUT SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU, SO I MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT SHE WAS YOU...

IT HAP-PENS HERE IN HI-NAMU-ZAWA EVERY YEAR.

A SERIES OF MYSTE-RIOUS DEATHS.

YOU CAN'T MIX US UP THAT MUCH, CAN YOU? WE WEAR DIFFERENT CLOTHES AND WEAR OUR HAIR DIFFERENTLY.

THE CANDIDATES TO BE IT'S VICTIMS ...

...ARE TAKANO-SAN, TOMITAKE-SAN, SHION...

...AND...

...ME...?

CHAPTER 7
THE FIFTH YEAR'S CURSE

FINISHED PROBLEM FIVE!

MMM (HUMMM)

MMM

MMM

DID I GET IT RIGHT?

DID I?

はぁ

BAH (PRESENT)

ぼぉ～

BOOO (DAAAZE)

BESSORI (EXHAUSTED)

DID YOU TWO GET ENOUGH SLEEP? DID YOU?

THE FESTIVAL LAST NIGHT WAS REALLY FUN.

RENA COULDN'T SLEEP EITHER FROM ALL THE EXCITE-MENT.

HA HA HA...

I COULDN'T SLEEP LAST NIGHT.

IT HAPPENS EVERY YEAR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING...

...A BIZARRE INCIDENT WHERE ONE PERSON DIES AND ONE PERSON DISAPPEARS...

...AND UNDERNEATH IT ARE GLIMPSES OF HINAMIZAWA'S COUNTLESS DREADFUL TRADITIONS.

BUT IN THE END, "OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE" DIDN'T STRIKE LAST NIGHT.

AND SCHOOL, AS ALWAYS, IS PEACE ITSELF.

SATOKO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

WHA !?

GATA (CLATTER)

OW!?

POKO (THWACK)

POKO

UGH, HOW ANTI-CLIMACTIC ...

FUA (YAWN)

WHO OTHER THAN YOU WOULD THROW CHALK IN THE MIDDLE OF CLASS...

NU (LOOM)

WHAT!? IT WASN'T ME!!

MAEBARA-KUUUUN. GO WASH YOUR FACE.

SENSEI!!

NIKOOO (GRIIIN)

SHUUUUUUUU (SSSSHHHHHHHS)

EH...? CHALK...?

GO (RUMBLE)

I KNEW YOU'D CHOOSE THE OUTSIDE FAUCET, KEI-CHAN.

KYU (SQUEAK)

SHOBO (POUR)

SHOBO

MIIIN (HUMMM)

MIIIN

MION. YOU HERE TO WASH YOUR FACE TOO?

HEH-HEH. IT DOES FEEL BETTER BEING OUTSIDE, AFTER ALL.

YOU SERIOUS !?

HA-HA... I'M GOING HOME EARLY! MY HEAD IS THROBBING, SO SENSEI GAVE THE OKAY.

OH, YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU ARE A LITTLE WARM.

PITO (STICK)

TON (TAP)

HYA!

GIVE ME A BREAK TODAY.

YOU HAVE A HANGOVER!? I SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED WORRYING!

AH HA!

A- ACTUALLY, AT THE PARTY AFTER THE FESTIVAL, I KIND OF...

KUI (FLICK)

HEH HEH...

WELL, TAKE CARE WALKING HOME.

WILL DO.

OH YEAH.

PITA (STOP)

I KINDA WANNA ASK YOU SOMETHING.

NN?

PACHA (SPLASH)

PACHA

LAST NIGHT.

ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

YOU DIDN'T SEE TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN, DID YOU?

I-I DON'T KNOW...? DID I?

I FEEL LIKE MAYBE I DID, BUT MAYBE I DIDN'T...

AND YET...

...WHY DOES SHE BRING UP THOSE TWO NAMES...?

LAST NIGHT AGAIN.

THEN I HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION.

I WANT TO FORGET THAT WE SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN AS FAST AS I CAN.

UH...

UM, WELL...

EH...?

SO WHAT IS SHE SAYING?

I... TOLD YOU, I DON'T KNOW IF I SAW HER OR NOT...

IT'S NOT LIKE THERE IS A CURSE...

...KNOWS THAT WE SNUCK INTO THE SAIGU-DEN?

PICHA (SPLASH)

PICHA

PICHA

YOU...

DON'T TELL ME MION...

...ASKED ME THAT LAST NIGHT, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU DIDN'T SEE SHION, DID YOU?

...I MIGHT GET A DIFFERENT ANSWER.

I THOUGHT IF I ASKED YOU AGAIN...

BIKU (WINCE)

...WHY!?

WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT I SAW HER!?

BAH (TURN)

NO BIG REASON...

SARA (SLIDE)

BIKU

WHA- WHAT'S WITH THOSE EYES?

MION...?

MION!?

...DIDN'T SEE HER, DID YOU?

DOKUN

YOU REALLY...

DOKUN (BADUM)

THERE ARE PEOPLE SAYING BAD THINGS.

BUT I DON'T BELIEVE THAT YOU WOULD DO ANYTHING WRONG...

POTA (DRIP)

ABOUT TOMITAKE-SAN, TAKANO-SAN, SHION, AND YOU, KEI-CHAN...

...KEI-CHAN. YOU WEREN'T...

...WITH TOMI-TAKE-SAN AND TAKANO-SAN...

POTA

...AND SHION...

YOU WEREN'T, WERE YOU?

NO...

...N-

I'LL TELL EVERYONE, THEN. THAT YOU WEREN'T A PART OF ANY OF THAT BAD STUFF!

OH, GOOD.

NIKO (GRIN)

TELL EVERYONE...

EVERYONE...

TELL THEM I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

YEAH.

PLEASE, TELL EVERYONE.

SEE YOU LATER! BYE-BYE!

DID I DO SOMETHING WAY WORSE...

...THAN I THOUGHT I DID?

RIRIRIRIRIN (RRRRRRRING)

RIRIRI

WHO'S "EVERYONE" !!?

OKINOMIYA

KEIICHI! YOU HAVE A PHONE CALL FROM SHION SONO-ZAKI-SAN!

HELLO-ELLO ♡ KEI-CHAN!

HA! (GASP!)

SHION, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABO— HN?

KON (POKE)

AH-HA-HA. YOU GOT ME.

YOUR FACE IS RED. YOU WERE DRINKING, LAST NIGHT TOO, WEREN'T YOU?

GOOD AFTER-NOON!

SHION!

I'M SORRY FOR CALLING YOU ALL THE WAY OUT HERE TO OKINOMIYA.

IT'S FINE. WHAT IS IT? YOU WORKING IN OKINOMIYA TODAY?

HUH? DIDN'T I TELL YOU?

I DON'T LIVE IN THE MAIN HOUSE IN HINAMIZAWA. I LIVE IN OKINOMIYA.

EH? YOU'RE SISTERS, BUT YOU LIVE APART?

YES, I LIVE WITH OUR PARENTS IN OKINOMIYA, AND ONEE LIVES IN HINAMIZAWA WITH BATCHA.

ONEE IS THE HEIRESS, SO SHE'S LIVING WITH BATCHA AND HAS TO TRAIN TO BE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

WOW, THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY? MION?

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS PRETTY FAMOUS AROUND HERE, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.

WHOA, REALLY?

BUT WE HAD A LOT OF SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISES AFTER THE WAR, AND OUR INFLUENCE GREW ENORMOUSLY.

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN OLD HINAMIZAWA FAMILY.

W-WAIT A MINUTE!

WE'RE ESPECIALLY STRONG IN FINANCE AND REAL ESTATE.

THERE ARE ALSO SONOZAKIS ON THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE PREFECTURAL ASSEMBLY.

WE ALL HELP EACH OTHER AS RELATIVES AND BACK UP EACH OTHER'S UNDERTAKINGS.

EVEN IN OKINOMIYA, THERE ARE A LOT OF BUSINESSES RUN BY SONOZAKIS.

...IS REALLY INFLUEN-TIAL...?

ARE YOU SAYING THAT AROUND HERE, THE SONOZAKI FAMILY...

YES, THEY'RE QUITE INFLUEN-TIAL!

NN HN HN HN.

UM, YOU'RE...

NA-HA-HA!

...OOISHI-SAN, FROM THE POLICE?

I'M HONORED YOU REMEMBER ME.

HELLO, HELLO. MIGHT YOU BE ON A DATE TODAY?

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THOUGHT, I WISH YOU WOULDN'T HAVE INTER-RUPTED.

TWO-TIMING THE SONOZAKI SISTERS. YOU'RE QUITE THE TOUGH GUY.

UWAH!

GUI (HUG)

N-NO, I'M NOT TWO-TIMING... RIGHT, SHION!?

WHAT'S WITH THIS GUY!?

WATA (FLUSTER)

SH-SHION!!!

NA-HA-HA なーはーは

WELL, I'LL CALL YOU LATER TONIGHT!

EH?

SU (STAND)

OH, I NEED TO BE GETTING TO WORK SOON.

YES... THANK YOU...

WELL, YOU'RE QUITE THE BIG SHOT, TO BE ABLE TO GET SO CLOSE TO THE SONOZAKI GIRLS.

AN ICED TEA FOR YOU, MAEBARA-SAN?

YEAH...

EH? YAKUZA?

DON'T TELL ME SHE MEANT "YAKUZA HEIRESS"?

DID YOU KNOW? THEIR FATHER IS THE YAKUZA WHO HAS THIS WHOLE AREA UNDER HIS THUMB.

THE BIG FAMILY THAT CONTROLS EVERYTHING FROM HINAMIZAWA TO OKINOMIYA.

SHE'LL BE INHERITING THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ITSELF.

NO, NO. MION-SAN WON'T ONLY BE INHERITING THAT LAME YAKUZA ORGANIZATION.

...SHE MIGHT BE ABLE TO KILL SOMEONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET AND HAVE IT SWEPT UNDER THE RUG.

IF SHE FELT LIKE IT...

WHATEVER MION'S FAMILY MAY BE, MION IS THE BEST FRIEND I COULD EVER HAVE!

OF COURSE NOT. IT WAS JUST AN EXAMPLE.

MION WOULDN'T KILL ANYBODY!

BA CTURND

SFX: MUKUZU (GRAB)

!

むくず

OH, NOW, NOW. DON'T BE SO COLD.

!!!

WELL, I'LL BE GOING TOO.

WHAT WOULD THE POLICE WANT WITH ME?

TO SEE ME...? WE DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN TO RUN INTO EACH OTHER?

HERE I CAME ALL THIS WAY TO SEE YOU.

NN-FU-FU

んっふっふっ

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ANSWER A FEW LITTLE QUESTIONS.

YOU MAY CALL IT A CHAT, BUT...!

.....

.....

IF YOU LIKE, YOU CAN THINK OF IT AS A CHAT WITH AN OLD MAN YOU HAPPEN TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH.

MOMI

もみ

MOMI (MASSAGE)

もみ

YOU DIDN'T SEE JIROU TOMITAKE-SAN AND MIYO TAKANO-SAN ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, DID YOU?

KARA (RATTLE)

THEN LET ME RE-PHRASE MY QUESTION.

GU (CLENCH)

OHHH? ARE YOUR MEMORIES FUZZY?

NO TELLING ME YOU HAD SOME ALCOHOL AND DON'T REMEMBER VERY WELL.

WHY IS EVEN HE ASKING?

I-I DON'T KNOW... DID I?

WH-

I FEEL LIKE MAYBE I DID, BUT MAYBE I DIDN'T.

WHY...?

THAT SAME NIGHT, YOU DIDN'T SEE SHION-SAN, DID YOU?

I MIGHT HAVE MISTAKEN HER FOR MION...

I MIGHT HAVE SEEN HER, BUT, YOU KNOW, SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE MION...

...I-I'M SORRY...

カラ カラ カラ
KARA (RATTLE) KARA KARA

IS THAT SO? NA-HA-HA-HA!

HA!

HA-HA...

YUSA (SHAKE)

YUSA

YOU COULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT.

GUI (YANK)

KARA

YOU COULDN'T HAVE MISTAKEN THEM FOR EACH OTHER THAT EASILY.

MAE-BARA-SAN.

MION-SAN AND SHION-SAN WEAR COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CLOTHES.

...I WAS JUST CHECKING.

PON (PAT)

ZUZU (SLIP)

AH...

KOTSU (CLICK)

KOTSU

KOTSU

NIII (GRIIND)

YOU MET WITH ALL OF THEM.

I SAW YOU HAVING A PLEASANT CONVERSATION WITH THEM MYSELF.

I'M SORRY.

I'M SORRY.

I'M SORRY.

THAT'S RIGHT I DID SOMETHING WRONG

I SNUCK INTO A SACRED SANCTUARY

I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED IF HE JUST ACCUSED ME TO MY FACE.

IF I APOLOGIZED LIKE THAT...

...WOULD THEY FORGIVE ME...?

SHUT UP, SHION! RUNNING AWAY LIKE THAT!

Ah-ha-ha! Poor Kei-chan.

It's your own fault for spacing out.

SHE DOESN'T UNDER-STAND HOW I FEEL...

THIS IS JUST THE WAY SHE IS!

After we all left the saiguden.

DOKU (THUMP)

DOKU

Um... yesterday... on the evening of the Cotton Drifting...

EH?

Well? What did you want to talk about?

AH, OH YEAH!

You didn't see Takano-san and Tomitake-san, did you?

DOK-UN (THUMP)

TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN...

YOU DIDN'T SEE TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN, DID YOU?

YOU DIDN'T SEE TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN, DID YOU?

...Kei-chan, calm down...

WHAT ABOUT YOU, SHION!? DID YOU SEE THEM!?

I-I didn't see them. I was with some relatives...

WELL I DIDN'T SEE THEM EITHER!

WHY!?

WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME THAT!!?

Actually...

Why are you asking me that too...!?

I hear that Takano-san and Tomitake-san are dead...

I MIGHT MEET WITH OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE OR BE MADE INTO A SACRIFICE.

WE FOUR ARE THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATES TO BE ITS VICTIMS.

YOU'RE... KIDDING, RIGHT?

GAKU (DROP)

ZUIRU (SLIP)

DON'T TELL ME THE CURSE ...

...REALLY HAPPENED.

NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING

This is number three. I read you loud and clear.

This is Okinomiya Station. Number three, go ahead. Number three, go ahead.

Backup is on the way. Please stand by for further instructions.

CHAPTER 8 DEMONED AWAY

MR. TOMITAKE DIED OF SHOCK FROM BLOOD LOSS AFTER CLAWING AT HIS OWN THROAT.

JUDGING FROM HIS BODILY SECRETIONS, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE DECEASED WAS IN A STATE OF EXTREME AGITATION.

AND THERE WERE SEVERAL BRUISES ON HIS BODY... FROM THEIR SHAPE AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS, WE GATHER THEY WERE THE RESULT OF AN UNARMED ATTACK BY MULTIPLE ASSAILANTS.

HIS OWN SKIN AND MUSCLE TISSUE WAS PACKED TIGHTLY UNDER HIS FINGERNAILS.

THEY FOUND HER BODY IN THE GIFU MOUNTAINS, BUT GIVEN ITS CONDITION THEY'RE HAVING AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TIME CONFIRMING HER IDENTITY.

THEY'VE FOUND A BODY THEY THINK IS MIYO TAKANO'S!!

OOISHI-SAN!!

DA (DASH)

SO THE SCUFFLE BROKE OUT, AND IN A STATE OF PANIC HE CLAWED OUT HIS OWN THROAT?

KOMIYAMA-SAN AND THE OTHERS ARE CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A THOROUGH NIGHT SEARCH OF THE OKINOMIYA DENTAL OFFICE.

WE'LL HAVE TO COMPARE THE DENTAL IMPRESSIONS TO HER MEDICAL RECORDS.

...THE LATTER.

IS SHE IN PIECES? BURNT TO A CRISP?

TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN ARE...

...DEAD ...?

WHAT ON EARTH IS OYASHIRO-SAMA THINKING THIS YEAR?

OOISHI-SAN! THIS IS WONDERFUL! WE FOUND THIS YEAR'S MISSING PERSON!

NO, KUMA-CHAN. IF THEY MEANT TO MAKE HER DISAPPEAR, THEY WOULD HAVE BURIED HER OR THROWN HER INTO THE OCEAN.

BUT THEY SPECIFIC-ALLY BURNED HER.

About the causes of death.

They say they're afraid of giving Hinami-zawa a bad image or something.

Last year they started dealing with the incidents that happen around the Cotton Drifting in secret.

Yes. I heard Father talking about it on the phone.

So you really didn't know.

And Takano-san was burned to death!!

Apparently they don't know yet if it was murder or suicide.

Tomitake-san killed himself by clawing his neck!!

.....

WHA—

THIS MUST BE...

I THINK SO TOO.

IF YOU'RE GONNA DIE, YOU'D PICK AN EASIER WAY TO GO, RIGHT!!?

WHO WOULD KILL THEM-SELVES LIKE THAT!!?

...OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...

BUT EVERY YEAR, ONE PERSON DIES, AND ONE PERSON DISAPPEARS ...

THEY FOUND TWO BODIES.

DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THE CURSE THIS YEAR?

KEI-CHAN...

No, if both of their deaths were Oyashiro-sama's Curse...

... then two sacrifices should be needed to calm Oyashiro-sama's anger.

GUGU (CLENCH)

B-BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT THERE WERE TWO VICTIMS, RIGHT...?

GYU (SQUEEZE)

Takano-san broke into the saiguden, and she died too.

Tomitake-san opened the lock and died.

If they need two sacrifices to match them...

AAAAAAHHHHHH!

...it would be the two of us who went into the Saiguden ...!!

BUT...

IT'S NOT LIKE WE STOLE ANYTHING OR BROKE ANYTHING.

JUST BECAUSE WE WENT INSIDE THE SAIGUDEN...?

SFX: GATA (CLATTER) GATA

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE.

...YESTER-DAY...

THERE MAY BE SOME PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY HEARD, BUT...

SHE'S SAYING I'M GOING TO DISAPPEAR ANYWAY!?

JUST LIKE SOMEONE DIES AND SOMEONE DISAPPEARS EVERY YEAR!!?

...THE VILLAGE CHIEF, KIMIYOSHI-SAN, WENT MISSING.

SFX ZAWA (MURMUR)

IT WAS THE VILLAGE CHIEF...?

EH...?

THEN WE WOULDN'T NEED A SACRIFICE, WOULD WE...?

HE WAS DEMONED AWAY...! I JUST KNOW IT!

BUT THE CURSE DIDN'T STRIKE THIS YEAR, DID IT?

BUT HE RAN AWAY FROM HOME, DIDN'T HE? SOMEBODY SAW HIM WITHDRAW ALL HIS SAVINGS AND GET ON THE BULLET TRAIN AT NAGOYA STATION.

COME TO THINK OF IT, SATOSHI-KUN WENT MISSING AROUND THIS TIME LAST YEAR TOO.

NN?

I THOUGHT IF ANYONE WAS GOING TO BE DEMONED AWAY, IT WOULD BE ME AND SHION.

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

PAAA (WATERRR)

ARMBAND: DAY DUTY

DAH (DASH)

YORO (STAGGER)

AH... KEIICHI...

WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU FALL?

N-NO, I DIDN'T, SIR. NOTHING'S WRONG, SIR.

GYU (SQUEEZE)

BUT ANYWAY, KEIICHI...

RIKA-CHAN!?

ON THE NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL ...

...DID YOU DO SOMETHING WRONG?

KEIICHI...

RIKA-CHAN TOO?

DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A BIG STOREHOUSE A LITTLE WAYS BEHIND THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS, SIR?

IT'S CALLED THE SAIGUDEN, SIR.

C-
CATS...?

BUT THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS INSIDE THAT SCARED THE CATS.

THE CATS WERE SO STARTLED AND SURPRISED, THEY RAN AWAY AS FAST AS THEY COULD, SHAKING AND SHIVERING AND MEOWING, SIR.

SOME CATS SNUCK INSIDE ON THE NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL.

THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

THE CATS WERE CATS, SIR. MEOW, MEOW.

IT CAN'T BE.

WHO ARE YOU SAYING THE CATS ARE...?

RIKA-CHAN KNOWS I SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN TOO!!

PLEASE... TELL ME...

WHAT SHOULD THE CATS DO NOW?

TH-THEY'LL BE ALL RIGHT ...?

日直 DAY DUTY

THE CATS ARE CATS, SO THEY JUST HAVE TO KEEP MEOWING, AND THEY'LL BE ALL RIGHT, SIR.

.....

...GH ...!

IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH JUST MEOWING?

TH-THERE IS...

...SOME DOGS SAW THE CATS SNEAK IN.

ARMBAND: DAY DUTY

THE DOGS TAKE TURNS GOING TO THE CATS...

...AND KEEP ASKING THEM IF THEY SNUCK IN.

EH...?

THE CATS ARE AFRAID, BUT REALLY IT'S NOT SUCH A TERRIBLE THING, SIR.

IT'S JUST THAT SOME OF THE DOGS HAVE THE WRONG IDEA, SIR.

BUT!

THAT NIGHT, TWO OF THE CATS THAT SNUCK IN...

!?

YOU MEAN TOMITAKE AND TAKANO?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR.

I WILL PROTECT THE CATS, SIR.

YOU SHOULD FORGET ABOUT THEM, SIR.

HOWEVER THOSE TWO MIGHT HAVE DIED, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, KEIICHI.

FORGET EVERYTHING AND LEAVE IT ALL TO ME, SIR.

RI-RIKA-CHAN.

I WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SIR.

!?

KEIICHI!

IF THE DOGS WHO HAVE THE WRONG IDEA COME AND SNARL AT THE CATS...

...PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

ZAAA (WHOOOSH)

WAS IT OKAY...

...TO OPEN UP TO RIKA-CHAN...?

...IT'S LIKE SHE'S PERSONALLY INVOLVED.

NOT ONLY DOES SHE KNOW ABOUT THE INCIDENT...

THE WAY SHE TALKED...

EH!?

KEIICHI! PHONE!

AND RIKA-CHAN IS THE PRIESTESS AT FURUDE SHRINE! SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE WORST PERSON TO TALK TO...

IT'S A GIRL! YOU LITTLE SO-AND-SO! YOU'RE GETTING A LOT OF GIRLS CALLING LATELY!

oooo
oooo

YOU LITTLE LADY-KILLER, YOU! YOU COULD INTRODUCE YOUR FATHER TO AT LEAST ONE OF THEM!

SHION!?

Kei-chan? This is Shion. It looks like you're safe.

GOKU (GULP)

H-HELLO?

What!?

ACTUALLY... I KIND OF FEEL LIKE I'M BEING WATCHED.

Don't forget that we're in a situation where that's not necessarily the case.

SAFE...? OF COURSE I'M SAFE.

Y-YEAH.

It might only be my imagination, but you be careful too, Kei-chan.

ME TOO!

I GOT HER OFF MY CASE, BUT SHE KNOWS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED...!

ONEE QUESTIONED ME THE OTHER DAY ABOUT WHERE I WAS ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

And about Onee. Has she acted strange lately?

MION ...?

Onee's been acting strange ever since the Cotton Drifting.

SO MUCH SO THAT THE POLICE OFFICER OOISHI SUSPECTS THAT THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS ARE CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE VILLAGE, WITH THE SONOZAKI FAMILY AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL.

As I told you yesterday, the Sonozaki family has a strong influence over Hinamizawa.

HE SUSPECTS THE SONOZAKI FAMILY!?

WH-WHAT!?

THAT'S WHEN THE SONOZAKI FAMILY BECAME THE VILLAGE'S CENTER.

IN THE DISPUTES OVER THE HINAMIZAWA DAM, THE PRIEST WHO EVERYONE EXPECTED TO LEAD US WAS PASSIVE IN THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS.

...THEY WOULD STEAL AND BREAK EQUIPMENT FROM THE CONSTRUCTION SITE AND THREATEN THE PEOPLE INVOLVED.

THEY EVEN KIDNAPPED THE MINISTER OF CONSTRUCTION'S GRANDSON.

THEY DIDN'T ONLY HOLD PROTESTS AND TRIALS...

SIGN: NO TRESPASSING

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY...

I DON'T BELIEVE IT...

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS VERY SECRETIVE; I'M A PART OF IT, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TRUE IT IS.

ONLY THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY AND A SELECT FEW LEARN ABOUT THE REALLY RISKY STUFF LIKE KIDNAPPINGS.

K- KIDNAPPED!? THEY DIDN'T!?

THEY'RE REVERED AS KIND OF DARK HEROES.

IN THE SHADOWS OF THEIR CLEAN RESISTANCE, THE SONOZAKI FAMILY TOOK UP SOME DIRTY BUSINESS.

YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT, KEI-CHAN, BUT THE VILLAGERS DO.

Although she may have been young, Onee acted at the center.

!?

SHE PULLED OFF EVERYTHING FROM PROPERTY DAMAGE TO THREATS AND VIOLENCE, AND HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY LOTS OF TIMES.

OUR FATHER IS A BIG-TIME YAKUZA, SO EVEN WHEN ONEE WAS YOUNG, SHE COULD COMMAND A LOT OF DELINQUENT TYPES

MION...?

Of course, they let her go right away because she was a child.

Onee and I are sisters, but in the Sonozaki family, it's like we're in completely different classes.

Please, be careful of Onee...

IT'S A LIE... MION'S NOT LIKE THAT.

SHE'S A FUN, PASSIONATE PERSON.

SHE'S THE BEST FRIEND I COULD EVER...

MION'S MY FRIEND.

I CAN'T SUSPECT HER...

O-OKAY...

Has anything unusual happened in Hinamizawa?

Do you have anything to talk about, Kei-chan?

...So, Kei-chan...

DO YOU THINK THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE CURSE?

...The village chief... You mean Kimiyoshi-ojiichan?

YEAH.

AH, OH YEAH.

APPARENTLY THE VILLAGE CHIEF HAS GONE MISSING.

APPARENTLY THE WHOLE VILLAGE IS LOOKING FOR HIM, BUT THEY HAVEN'T FOUND HIM YET...

.....
.....

SHION...?

...Why?

I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS ...

... BUT THEY SAY HE NEVER CAME HOME AFTER THE VILLAGE MEETING LAST NIGHT.

.....
.....

I-I'M SORRY. IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS TRYING TO HIDE IT.

Why didn't you tell me sooner!? That's very important!!

HEY, SHION...? SHION...!?

...we do?

WHAT SHOULD WE DO, KEI-CHAN...?

ABOUT GOING INSIDE THE SAIGUDEN !!

I...TOLD KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN!

I TOLD RIKA-CHAN...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. ME TOO...

I'M SORRY. I...TOLD YOU IT WAS A SECRET.

BUT I FELT SO DISCOURAGED I COULDN'T HOLD IT IN ANYMORE.

SO... DID THE VILLAGE CHIEF KNOW THE CRAZY WAYS TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN DIED?

Yes.

AND I TOLD HIM...

...THAT I WAS AFRAID THEY DIED BECAUSE OF THE CURSE AND THAT I WOULD BE MADE A SACRIFICE TO QUELL OYASHIRO-SAMA'S ANGER.

BUT KIMIYOSHI-OJIICHAN DIDN'T GET MAD...

HE SMILED AND TOLD ME TO LEAVE IT TO HIM...

HE SAID I WOULDN'T BE DEMONED AWAY IF I FELT SORRY ABOUT IT.

STOP IT. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

It's because I told him.

HIC

...It's... my fault.

HIC

NO!! IT IS MY FAULT!

HE DISAPPEARED THE VERY NIGHT I TOLD HIM AND HE SAID IT WOULD BE OKAY!!

I MEAN, IT HAPPENED RIGHT AFTER I TOLD HIM!

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TOLD HIM!! IT'S BECAUSE I TALKED TO HIM... BECAUSE I OPENED UP TO HIM.

THEY KILLED HIM!!

No!!

WOULDN'T THEY HAVE ERASED YOU BEFORE ERASING THE VILLAGE CHIEF JUST BECAUSE YOU TALKED TO HIM!?

HEY, CALM DOWN!!

THEY'RE PLANNING TO KILL US LAST!

... and kill us after they've put us through so much sadness!

That must be what they're trying to do!

They'll kill everyone we're close to in turn...

HYOOOO (HOOOOWL)

WH... WHA ...?

HUH...?

He was killed because I opened up to him!!!

SH-SHION, HEY...!

KATA (SHAKE)

KATA

He was killed because I talked to him!! He was killed because he knew!

BECAUSE SHE TALKED TO HIM...

BECAUSE SHE TALKED TO HIM...

...HE WAS KILLED.

ドク
DOKU (THUMP)

HE WAS KILLED...

...BECAUSE HE KNEW.

ドクン
DOKUN (BADUM)

BECAUSE SHE OPENED UP TO HIM.

HE WAS KILLED!!

R-
RIKA-
CHAN!!

Eh...?

I OPENED UP TO SOMEONE TOO! TO RIKA-CHAN!!

Rika-chan? You mean Rika-chama from Furude Shrine?

Y-
YEAH.

I'M SORRY! I'M GONNA CALL RIKA-CHAN!

BA (RUSH)

PUTSU (CLICK)

BASA BASA (RUSTLE)

RIKA-CHAN!! RIKA-CHAN!! RIKA-CHAN!!

PI (BEEP)

PI

KO KO

FURUDE, RI—

PLEASE BE SAFE!!

TURURURURU (RRRRING)

RIKA-CHAN!!

TURURURURU

ZAPA (SPLISH)

HEEEY! TELE-PHONE!

A KID NAMED KEIICHI-KUN!

EH? COMING!

CHAPTER 9

RIKA-CHAN MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE!!

EH?

Rena! Will you tell me where Rika-chan lives!?

WHAT'S THE MATTER ALL OF A SUDDEN? WHAT?

HELLO? KEIICHI-KUN?

Rena, it's me!

CHAPTER 9
DISAPPEARANCE

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
COTTON DRIFTING ARC

THIS IS RIKA-CHAN'S HOUSE...?

KEI-CHAN, WHY DO YOU THINK RIKA-CHAN IS IN TROUBLE AGAIN?

IT'S TOO LATE TO BE TELLING US IT'S ALL A JOKE.

MION ...!

PLEASE, BE CAREFUL OF ONEE.

WELL...I GUESS I HAD A HUNCH AND KEPT CALLING HER, BUT SHE NEVER ANSWERED THE PHONE. SO I GOT WORRIED.

DON'T TELL ME THEY GOT SATOKO TOO...?

KEIICHI-KUN! RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO-CHAN LIVE HERE BY THEMSELVES.

SATOKO TOO?

RIKA-CHAAAN! SATOKO-CHAAAN!

YOU HOME!?

GASHA (RATTLE)

GASHA

1

GAH (CLACK)

HERE'S A LADDER, KEI-CHAN.

THANKS!

SHOULD WE TRY THE SECOND-FLOOR WINDOWS!?

IT'S LOCKED. I WONDER IF WE CAN GET IN FROM SOMEWHERE.

GASHA

I'LL GO CHECK THE MAIN HOUSE!

TA (RUN)

GISHI (CREAK)

GISHI

BUT I HEAR IT'S BEEN LEFT EMPTY EVER SINCE HER PARENTS PASSED AWAY.

THE MAIN HOUSE?

THE HOUSE WHERE THE FURUDES REALLY LIVE.

TAKANO-SAN TOLD YOU ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF THE PRIEST AND HIS WIFE TWO YEARS AGO, RIGHT?

THE PRIEST AND HIS WIFE WERE RIKA-CHAN'S PARENTS.

EH...? PASSED ...?

HER PARENTS FELL FROM A CLIFF THREE YEARS AGO BECAUSE OF OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

AND HER BROTHER SATOSHI-KUN IS GONE TOO.

SATOKO DOESN'T HAVE ANY PARENTS EITHER.

SATOSHI HOJO, THE GUY WHO DISAP-PEARED LAST YEAR!

北条悟史

SATOSHI HOJO

SATOSHI... I'VE HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE.

SINCE THEN, THOSE TWO HAVE LIVED TOGETHER IN THIS CABIN.

THEY SAY IT'S HARD LIVING AT THEIR OLD HOUSES; IT REMINDS THEM OF THEIR PARENTS...

THEY NEVER SHOWED A HINT OF THAT AT SCHOOL.

I DIDN'T KNOW.

EH...? WHAT ...

SHE'S CURSED.

RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO SURE HAVE IT ROUGH.

I SAID SHE'S CURSED.

SATOKO HOJO.

SHE'S A CURSED GIRL, WHO'S TAKEN OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE UPON HERSELF.

MI...O...

AND THE AUNT WHO TORMENTED HER WAS BEATEN TO DEATH.

ONLY HER COLD PARENTS WHO TREATED HER LIKE SHE WAS GOOD FOR NOTHING DIED, AND SHE ALONE WAS SAVED.

IT WAS ONLY HER PARENTS WHO FELL FROM THE VIEWING PLATFORM AT THE PARK.

!?

THE POLICE DECIDED HE RAN AWAY FROM HOME, BUT SATOSHI-KUN WASN'T THE KIND OF PERSON WHO WOULD RUN AWAY!

GAH (JOLT)

AND, SATOSHI-KUN, THE BOY WHO PROTECTED HER, DISAPPEARED ON HER BIRTHDAY!

HE ALWAYS WORKED SO HARD FOR HIS SISTER!!

GAH

UNAPPRE-
CIATED
SATOSHI-
KUN!

THAT
POOR
SATOSHI-
KUN!

GATA

GATA

GATA
(RATTLE)

GATA

GATA

GATA

GATA

THAT
UNGRATEFUL
GIRL!!

SHE'S
CURSED!!
IF YOU GET
NEAR THAT
GIRL, YOU'LL
DIE FROM THE
CURSE OR BE
ERASED!!

THERE IS
NO PEACE
FOR THAT
GIRL!!!

M-
MION...!

I'M SURE IT'S
SATOKO'S
FAULT THAT
RIKA-CHAN
DISAPPEARED
TOO!!!

I KNOW IT, I KNOW IT, I
KNOW IT, I KNOW IT, I
KNOW IT, I KNOW IT!!!

HAA

HAA (HUFF)

I BORROWED THE KEY!

MII-CHAN! KEIICHI-KUN!!

PITA (STOP)

MION...?

SHE'S BACK TO NORMAL.

OH, GOOD. 'COS IT LOOKS LIKE THE WINDOW'S LOCKED TOO.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

SO WHAT WAS THAT...?

WHO THE HELL WAS THAT!?

TA
(STEP)
TA
TA
IF YOU'RE HERE, ANSWER ME!!
RIKA-CHAN! SATOKO-CHAN!
KACHI
(CLICK)
GARA
(RATTLE)
GARA

BAH (SWING)

RIKA-CHAN!

SATOKO !!

GATA (CLATTER)

EH? OH... YEAH ...

RENA! THEY'RE NOT GONNA BE IN THERE!!

BA (TURN)

SU (SHIFT)

WAS IT YOU!? WERE YOU THE DAMNED FOOL WHO DEMANDED A WARRANT TO SEARCH THE SAIGUDEN!?

GACHA (CLICK)

UNDERSTAND!? FURUDE SHRINE IS HOLY—A SACRED SITE, NOT BE DEFILED!! AND YOU TRY TO BARGE IN THERE WITH YOUR FILTHY FEET! FREEDOM OF RELIGION IS THE MOST VALUABLE RIGHT GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE BY OUR CONSTITUTION!!

OKINOMIYA POLICE

OOISHI-SAN! THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER DISAPPEAR-ANCE IN HINAMIZAWA!

THEY DENIED US A WARRANT TO SEARCH THE SAIGUDEN. THIS WILL GET IN THE WAY OF OUR INVESTIGATION.

IS THAT COUNCIL MEMBER SONO-ZAKI?

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THAT SAIGUDEN.

I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO ASK SOMEONE WHO'S ACTUALLY BEEN INSIDE.

TWO PEOPLE WENT MISSING ...!

THE SHRINE FAMILY'S ONLY DAUGHTER, RIKA FURUDE, AND SATOKO HOJO WHO WAS LIVING WITH HER.

RIKA-CHAAAN!

SATOKO-CHAAAN!

NGH...

HEEEY!

RIKA-CHAAAAN!

JARI (CRUNCH)

IT'S MY FAULT...

IT'S MY...

ZA (APPEAR)

RE...
NA...

LET'S GO BACK TO EVERYONE. THEY'RE ALL WORRIED.

KEIICHI-KUN.

SO THERE YOU ARE.

IT'S MY FAULT...

IT'S MY FAULT.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT?

I HOPE YOU'LL TELL ME.

IS IT YOUR FAULT, KEIICHI-KUN?

BKU (WINCE)

UH...

EH...?

IF I OPEN UP TO HER... ...SHE'LL DISAPPEAR.

SHE'LL BE KILLED...!!

KEIICHI-KUN.

NO! NO!!

BAH (HUDDLE)

NO!

IF I TELL YOU, YOU'LL DISAP-PEAR TOO...!

BAH (WHACK)

NO!!

SU (REACH)

IT'S OKAY. RENA WON'T DISAPPEAR.

NO MATTER WHAT.

RE ...

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ザワ

ザワ

ZAWA

DON'T ANY-BODY ELSE DISAP-PEAR

...

ZAH (APPEAR)

KEI-CHAN!

PLEASE.

I'M BEGGING...

NOTHING HAPPENED, DID IT?

YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE SUSPICIOUS WATCHING YOU OR PROWLING AFTER YOU, DID YOU?

GU (GRAB)

MION...

WHERE WERE YOU? I WAS SO WORRIED.

NN-FU-FU. HELLO, EVERYONE.

YOU MUST ALL BE TIRED FROM SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE DAY AFTER DAY.

MION.

I...I'M SORRY FOR WORRY-ING YOU.

NOTHING HAPPENED.

WELL, WELL, GOOD EVENING.

JUI (GRAB)
BUT NEVER MIND THAT. YOU YOUNG PEOPLE HAD BEST BE GETTING HOME.

DID THE POLICE GET ANY CLUES!?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. WE'RE LOOKING FOR THEM.

I'LL TAKE YOU HOME. NN-FU-FU.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TOMITAKE-SAN AND TAKANO-SAN ARE DOING ABOUT NOW?

MAEBARA-SAAAN.

ヴロロロ
(VRORORO)
(VRRRROOM)

KIKIIII
(SCREEEE)

OHH? PERHAPS YOU KNEW?

G CREAK

THE TRUTH IS, THEY'VE PASSED AWAY.

EH!?

THEY CHANGED THE LOCK ON THE SAIGUDEN TO A SIMPLE ONE, SO THIEVES GOT IN.

AND SO OYASHIRO-SAMA PUNISHED THEM, THEY SAY.

THAT'S RIGHT... BE-CAUSE SHION AND I OPENED UP TO THEM.

IT WOULD SEEM PEOPLE ARE SAYING IT'S BECAUSE THEY WENT INTO A FORBIDDEN BUILDING.

AND THERE ARE RUMORS THAT'S WHY THE VILLAGE CHIEF AND RIKA FURUDE-SAN WENT MISSING...

IT WAS TOO HEAVY FOR RIKA-SAN, AND IT WAS HARD FOR RIKA-SAN TO TAKE CARE OF THINGS, SO SHE ASKED THE VILLAGE CHIEF, AND THEY CHANGED IT TO A SIMPLER LOCK, AND THAT'S WHY.

UP UNTIL ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A BIG BOLT WITH SEVERAL LOCKS ON IT.

SOME OF THE VILLAGERS? WHO...?

THIS IS NEWS TO ME. WHERE ON EARTH DID HE HEAR THAT?

...IS WHAT SOME OF THE VILLAGERS ARE SAYING.

THE HEAD OF THE KIMI-YOSHI FAMILY, THE VILLAGE CHIEF, AND THE HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY, RIKA-SAN, HAVE DISAPPEARED.

I THINK THIS MIGHT BE BASED ON THE OLD TRADITIONS OF HINAMIZAWA.

SPECIFICALLY, THEY ARE THE VILLAGE CHIEF'S KIMIYOSHI FAMILY.

RIKA-SAN'S FURUDE FAMILY.

AND MION-SAN'S SONOZAKI FAMILY.

THERE ARE THREE OLD FAMILIES IN HINAMIZAWA, CALLED THE HONORABLE THREE FAMILIES.

LEGEND HAS IT THAT SINCE OLD TIMES NOTHING IN THE VILLAGE WAS DECIDED UNTIL AFTER THE THREE FAMILIES MET TOGETHER.

MAEBARA-SAN! IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'VE NOTICED FROM MION SONOZAKI-SAN?

MION AGAIN...

WHENEVER WE TALK ABOUT ŌYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE, WE ALWAYS END UP AT MION OF THE SONOZAKIS.

A-ANYWAY! HOW IS THE INVESTI-GATION GOING? ANY NEW DEVELOP-MENTS!?

BAH (TURN)

ALL RIGHT. THE TRUTH IS, IT'S A SECRET INVESTIGATION, BUT I GUESS I'LL TELL YOU.

SU (LEAN)

WE STILL DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE DETAILS ABOUT RIKA-SAN OR SATOKO HOJO-SAN...

...BUT, SINCE THEIR BICYCLES WERE GONE, THEY SAY THAT THEY WENT TO PLAY IN TOWN AND WENT MISSING.

THE DAY THAT THE VILLAGE CHIEF DISAPPEARED, HE HAD GONE OUT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING TO A HOSPITAL IN SHISHIBONE.

ACTUALLY, HE HAD HEMORRHOIDS. HE HAD BEEN GOING TO THE HOSPITAL IN SECRET TO GET TREATED.

AFTER HIS EXAMINATION, HE ATE LUNCH IN THE HOSPITAL AT ABOUT ONE IN THE AFTERNOON.

WE LEARNED ALL THAT FROM A RECEIPT IN HIS WALLET WE FOUND AT HIS HOME.

AND WHEN THE MEETING ENDED, ON HIS WAY HOME...

HE HAD A VILLAGE MEETING IN THE EVENING... BUT THE TRAIN HE TOOK HOME WAS LATE DUE TO AN ACCIDENT WHERE SOMEONE WAS HIT.

ACCORDING TO HIS FAMILY, HE MADE IT BACK HOME RIGHT BEFORE THE VILLAGE MEETING.

IT'S MY FAULT. IT'S BECAUSE I OPENED UP TO HIM.

THE VILLAGE CHIEF...THE OLD MAN WHO WAS SO KIND TO SHION.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

EH... UH...

EH ...?

(PIKU) (TWITCH)

RIGHT AFTER I TOLD HIM...!

THEN HE DISAPPEARED AFTER THE MEETING...

AND GOT BACK TO THE VILLAGE RIGHT BEFORE THE VILLAGE MEETING.

THE VILLAGE CHIEF WENT TO A HOSPITAL NO ONE KNEW ABOUT.

HE DISAPPEARED THE VERY NIGHT I TOLD HIM AND HE SAID IT WOULD BE OKAY!

WHEN... ...DID SHE TELL HIM!?

MAEBARA-SAN. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

GUH (GRAB)

WHAT ON EARTH WAS INSIDE!?

I KNOW THE FOUR OF YOU SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN.

LIKE MOUNTAINS OF DRUGS OR FIRE-ARMS!?

WAS THERE SOMETHING SO TERRIBLE HIDDEN INSIDE THAT YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT!?

YOU'RE THE LAST ONE...

MAEBARA-SAN! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN ASK!!

THAT NIGHT TOMITAKE-SAN AND TAKANO-SAN DIED.

AND SHION-SAN WENT MISSING THE NEXT DAY.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE STILL UNHARMED.

"YOU'RE THE LAST ONE."?

THE LAST...?

...STILL ALIVE OF EVERYONE WHO WENT INSIDE THE SAIGUDEN!!

THAT WAS THE LAST TIME ANYONE SAW HER; HER WHEREABOUTS HAVEN'T BEEN CONFIRMED SINCE.

WE MET IN THE LIBRARY ON THE DAY AFTER THE COTTON DRIFTING, REMEMBER?

OH, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW.

BAH (LUNGE)

SH-

SHION!? WHEN!!?

Kei-chan, you're safe.

THEN... ...THAT PHONE CALL...

THAT WAS SHION. IT WAS SHION. IT WAS SHION. IT WAS SHION... WASN'T IT...?

...AND SHE CALLED EARLIER TODAY.

SHE CALLED TWO DAYS AGO...

SHION-SAN WENT MISSING.

KEI-CHAN...!

I'LL CALL YOU LAT-ER, OKAY?

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT, MAEBARA-SAN.

Higurashi

WHEN THEY CRY

COTTON DRIFTING ARC

CHAPTER 10
PHONE CALL

カチ
KACHI

カチ
KACHI

圭一へ
お父さんの仕事で遅くなります。
先に夕食を食べておいてね
母さんより

NOTE: KEIICHI,
WE'LL BE OUT LATE FOR YOUR FATHER'S JOB. EAT DINNER WITHOUT US.
MOM

カチ
KACHI

カチ
KACHI

カチ
KACHI
(TICK)

SHION HAD DISAPPEARED.
SHE DISAPPEARED ON THE NIGHT AFTER THE COTTON DRIFTING.
AND YET...

THEN...

...WILL SHE CALL AGAIN TODAY!?

KATA (SHIVER)

KATA

....SHE HAD BEEN CALLING ME UNTIL TODAY AS IF NOTHING WAS OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

...THAT MUST BE IT...

...IT MUST BE...

DID SHION REALLY DISAP-PEAR?

MAYBE SHE'S JUST HIDING SOMEWHERE THE POLICE CAN'T FIND HER?

WAIT.

KEIICHI

HA (HUFF) は♥

HA は~

PAN (SLAP)

STOP COMING UP WITH CONVE-NIENT EXPLANA-TIONS...

KEIICHI.

WAS IT REALLY SHION I'VE BEEN TALKING TO ON THE PHONE...?

I NEED TO MAKE SURE...

...IS CALLING ME, PRE-TENDING TO BE SHION...?

THEN WHO...

AND

...IF IT WASN'T SHION...?

ZOKU (CHILL)

IT SOUNDED JUST LIKE SHION.

IT MAY BE A VOICE ON THE PHONE, BUT IT WOULDN'T BE SO EASY TO MATCH.

EXACTLY LIKE SHION...

SOMEONE WHO CAN TALK EXACTLY LIKE SHION...

THERE IS SOMEONE ...

WHO ELSE... COULD HAVE DONE IT...?

IT WAS MION !!

AND THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN THE PAST...

SHE SHOOK THE LADDER, SPITTING OUT STUFF ABOUT CURSES.

SHE QUESTIONED ME ABOUT THE SAIGUDEN.

MION WAS ALWAYS...

...AT THE CENTER OF THIS WHIRLPOOL OF INCIDENTS.

RIRIRIN

RIRIRI

JIRIRIRI

JIRIRIRIN

JIRIRIRI
(RRRRRING)

RRRRRRIN

RRRRRRI

RRRRRRI

JIRIRIRI

JIRIRIRIN

JIRIRIN

JIRIRIN

RIRIRIRIN

JIRIRIRIRI

I'M SCARED I'M SCARED I'M SCARED

NO, NO, NO!

JIRIRIRIR ZRRRRING

HUFF

HUFF

SHOULD I PRETEND I'M NOT HERE?

...THAT WOULD ONLY GIVE HER TIME TO GET READY BEFORE ERASING ME!!

BUT...

I HAVE TO FACE HER!

I CAN'T RUN AWAY !!

I'M THE NEXT ONE SHE'S AFTER!!

GAH (GRAB)

H- HELLO?

GUGU (CLENCH)

GACHA (CLICK)

This is Shion.

GU (TWITCH)

CALM DOWN, KEIICHI...

JUST CASUALLY LISTEN TO HER.

THEY CAN'T FIND HER. AND SATOKO'S DISAPPEARED TOO...

How was Rika-chan?

HEY, SHION.

I'LL PULL OFF HER SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO...?

ELUDE...

Oh, Kei-chan... Don't let it get you down...

...HER QUES-TIONS.

I think they've been killed.

GURA (STAGGER)

I think it would be really hard to kidnap someone and keep them alive.

DAN (BAM)

H-

HOW CAN SHE...

...TALK ABOUT IT SO EASILY?

As long as they're not using them as hostages, it would make the most sense to kill them once they were done with them.

GAH (WHAM)

WHY!?

THE DAM DISPUTES ENDED A LONG TIME AGO! HASN'T THE CURSE DONE ENOUGH!!?

TELL ME...!

WHY DOES SOMEONE IN HINAMIZAWA HAVE TO DIE EVERY YEAR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING!?

U!

A

AAAAA

AAAA

AAAH

That way, they've created a system for eliminating the village's enemies!

Someone in the village is using Oyashiro-sama's Curse to justify repeatedly killing and causing disappearances every Cotton Drifting!

THEY HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE DAM DISPUTES, SO WHY!!?

THEN WHY RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO!?

DAN (BAM)

WHO!?

WHO THE HELL WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!!?

WHO!?

I understand how you feel, Kei-chan.

There was no reason for these people to be cursed, so why!!?

AH!

AHH...

WHO...?

IT'S HER.

GIRI GLENCHO

THIS "SHION" KILLED THEM...!!

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HOSPITAL, SHION?

THE VILLAGE CHIEF WAS AT THE HOSPITAL THAT DAY; HE HADN'T TOLD ANYONE.

Eh?

WHEN... DID YOU OPEN UP TO HIM?

Um... well...

THE VILLAGE CHIEF GOT BACK TO THE VILLAGE RIGHT BEFORE THE VILLAGE MEETING AND DISAPPEARED RIGHT AFTER!!

IN OTHER WORDS!

It's hard for me too. There's no one in my family I can depend on...

Hic

Hic

And my one friend, Kimiyoshi-ojiichan, was killed because I opened up to him...

Hic

SHION WENT MISSING THE DAY AFTER THE COTTON DRIFTING!

Um...well... Actually, I was at the village meeting too.

DAN (BAM)

THERE WASN'T ANY TIME FOR YOU TO OPEN UP TO HIM!!

SHION!! YOU NEVER SAW THE VILLAGE CHIEF!

YOU NEVER OPENED UP TO HIM!

How could you...

Hic

-Hic-

SHION

...

-Hic-

-Sob-

-Hic-

-Sob-

-Hic-

-Hic-

IF WHAT I'M SAYING IS WRONG, THEN PLEASE TELL ME...

-Hic-

-Hic-

-Hic-

-Hic-

...
-Hic-
...

Ngh...
-Hic-

PLEASE...

...Heh.

...
-Hic-

SHION...

...
-Sob-

KEH KEH KEH

TSUUU

TSUUU

TSUUU

444

CHI (CHEEP) CHI CHI

PIN-POOON (PING-POOONG)

GACHA (KACHAK)

GOOD MORNING.

...MORNING ...

ABOUT GOING INTO THE SAIGUDEN... YOU MEAN?

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO QUESTION ME, RENA...?

I THINK THAT MII-CHAN WASN'T AS MAD ABOUT YOU SNEAKING IN...

...AS SHE WAS ABOUT YOU HIDING IT.

JARI (CRUNCH)

BUT YOU KNOW.

MII-CHAN TOLD ME...

MII-CHAN WAS REALLY MAD.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE REMEMBERED ON YOUR OWN...

...AND GONE TO APOLOGIZE, KEIICHI-KUN.

SU (PASS)

I'M GOING TO GO APOLOGIZE TO M!ON.

THEN I'LL HAVE HER PUT AN END TO ALL OF THIS.

RENA...

I WON'T LET YOU GO ALONE, KEIICHI-KUN.

SO WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING UNLESS WE CATCH SOMEONE IN THE ACT, IS THAT IT?

FUUU (EXHALE)

WE CAN'T ASK ANYONE WHAT HAPPENED OR SEARCH ANYONE'S HOMES.

THE LAST TIME ANYONE SAW HER WAS WHEN SHE GAVE HER ADDRESS AT THE COTTON DRIFTING CLOSING CEREMONIES.

WHO WAS THE LAST PERSON TO SEE ORYOU SONO-ZAKI?

園崎

NAMEPLATE SONOZAKI

THE ONLY FAMILY HEAD REMAINING WAS ORYOU, HEAD OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

BEFORE TODAY, THE HEADS OF TWO OF THE THREE FAMILIES, THE KIMIYOSHI AND FURUDE FAMILIES, DISAPPEARED.

IS THAT TRUE? I'D LIKE TO SEE HER FACE AND TAKE HER PULSE.

ACCORDING TO MION SONOZAKI, SHE'S BEEN IN BED WITH POOR HEALTH.

WELL, IF IT ISN'T MAEBARA-SAN.

SO EARLY IN THE MORNING. I'M JEALOUS.

OOISHI-SAN, WE NEED TO TALK TO YOU.

ZAAA CWHOOOOSHO

カサ
KASA
(RUSTLE)

ビル
BILL
ビル
BILL
ビル
BILL
ビル!
BILL!
(BEEEEP)

コト
KOTO
(CLACK)

I'M SORRY. I'M NOT REALLY DRESSED.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING.

THAT'S RIGHT. AH-HA-HA.

HA HA HA...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE SO EARLY IN THE MORNING? YOU'RE BOTH DITCHING SCHOOL? YOU'RE SUCH DELINQUENTS.

MION.

I NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU.

KOKU (NOD) コク

YOU? APOLOGIZE TO ME...?

ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING ...

PIKU (PERK) ピク

...I DID GO INSIDE THE SAIGUDEN.

I KNEW IT WAS WRONG!

I'M SORRY!

I'M REALLY SORRY!

I JUST WANTED TO EXPLORE A LITTLE, AND I DID SOMETHING TERRIBLE.

YOU MAY HAVE JUST BEEN EXPLORING OUT OF CURIOSITY, KEI-CHAN, BUT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO WON'T LET IT GO SO EASILY...

IF YOU UNDER-STAND THAT NOW, THEN IT'S OKAY.

IF YOU'RE SORRY, KEI-CHAN, THEN THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH, RIGHT?

MION... I'M SERIOUS !!

KEIICHI-KUN.

IT'S OKAY...

MIN IN CHUWWWO

MION

THAT'S ENOUGH. LET'S TELL HER EVERY-THING.

YOU SEEM TO WANT THAT TOO, MII-CHAN.

MION...

RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO CAME TO YOUR HOUSE THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, DIDN'T THEY...?

I DON'T REMEMBER. WHY DO YOU THINK SO...?

YOU SAW RIKA-CHAN'S ROOM, DIDN'T YOU, MII-CHAN?

REALLY, TOFU IS THE LAST THING YOU PUT IN MISO SOUP.

...WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ANY-THING?

THERE WAS ABOUT HALF A BLOCK OF TOFU INSIDE.

THERE WAS A POT ON THE STOVE WITH SOME MISO SOUP IN IT.

THEY WANTED TO CHILL THE TOFU.

NEXT, I LOOKED IN THE REFRIGERATOR. THERE WERE SIDE DISHES AND THE REST OF THE TOFU INSIDE.

FOR THEM TO WRAP UP THE DINNER THEY HAD JUST MADE AND PUT IT IN THE REFRIGERATOR WITHOUT TOUCHING IT.

IT'S STRANGE, ISN'T IT?

THAT WOULD MEAN THEY WERE IN THE KITCHEN UNTIL RIGHT BEFORE DINNER.

SO I LOOKED FOR THEIR BIG BOTTLE OF SOY SAUCE UNDER THE SINK.

THEN I LOOKED ON TOP OF THE FOLDING DESK.

THE SMALL BOTTLE OF SOY SAUCE ON THE DESK WAS EMPTY. CHILLED TOFU DOESN'T TASTE ANY GOOD WITHOUT SOY SAUCE.

AH-HA-HA, WHAT? SO THAT WOULD MAKE THEM COME TO MY HOUSE?

BUT THERE WAS NO SOY SAUCE BOTTLE.

....
....

!?

KOTO
(CLACK)

本場仕込みのお醤油まだまだ
たくさんあります。お気軽に
園崎までどうぞ。

NOTE WE STILL HAVE LOTS OF HOME MADE SOY SAUCE FEEL FREE TO STOP BY THE SONOZAKI'S

SU ISHOW.

YOU WROTE THIS BULLETIN YOURSELF.

RIKA-CHAN MUST HAVE SEEN THIS AND GONE TO YOUR HOUSE WITH HER BIG SOY SAUCE BOTTLE, MII-CHAN.

IT SAYS YOU'LL SHARE YOUR SOY SAUCE.

THEN, MII-CHAN, YOU TOOK RIKA-CHAN.

BUT IT DIDN'T END THERE.

I THINK YOU PROBABLY GOT A PHONE CALL.

IT WAS FROM SATOKO-CHAN.

YOU DIDN'T CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF RIKA-CHAN TELLING SATOKO-CHAN WHERE SHE WAS GOING.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE ANYONE KNOW THAT RIKA-CHAN HAD COME HERE.

SO YOU TRIED TO INVITE SATOKO-CHAN HERE.

"SATOKO, ACTUALLY I MADE TOO MUCH FOR DINNER TONIGHT; WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME HAVE SOME? RIKA-CHAN'S ALREADY EATEN."

LIKE THAT.

SATOKO-CHAN WRAPPED UP THE DINNER SHE HAD MADE AND CAME TO YOUR HOUSE.

THEN YOU TOOK SATOKO-CHAN TOO.

OIKI (CLENCH)

MION...! THE POLICE ALREADY SUSPECT YOU!

OOISHI-SAN'S MEN ARE WATCHING THIS HOUSE, READY TO BREAK IN AT ANY TIME.

HEH... HEH HEH...

HA HA HA

AH-HA HA HA

YOU GOT ME, YOU GOT ME. AH-HA-HA-HA-HA.

HA HA HA...

TO FIGURE OUT EVEN WHAT I SAID IN THE PHONE CALL JUST BY LOOKING IN THE FRIDGE...

TO THINK I'D HAVE SUCH A BRILLIANT DETECTIVE SO CLOSE BY...!

SU
(STAND)

PASA
(FLUTTER)

I AM MION, THE HEIR TO THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF.

I GREET YOU ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, ORYOU.

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THE SONOZAKI ESTATE TODAY.

IT WOULD SEEM THERE ARE VERY MANY THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK ME.

I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING WITHIN MY POWER, WITHOUT HIDING ANYTHING.

CHAPTER-11

SHION, TOMITAKE-SAN, AND TAKANO-SAN...AND THE VILLAGE CHIEF. MION, DID YOU...?

I MUST MAKE SURE THOSE WHO HARM THE VILLAGE SUFFER OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

AS THE NEXT HEAD OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

LETTING PEOPLE VIOLATE THE SANCTITY OF HINAMIZAWA ABASES THE VILLAGE'S AUTHORITY.

KIICHIROU KIMIYOSHI AND RIKA FURUDE, WHILE HEADS OF THE THREE FAMILIES, CHANGED THE SAIGUDEN'S LOCK TO A SIMPLE ONE, ALLOWING THIEVES TO GET IN.

SHION AND THE OTHERS DEFILED THE SACRED SAIGU-DEN.

AS THE HEIR OF THE DEMON.

TWO STONE ONE. EVERYONE RETALIATES IN UNISON. SCATTER THE INTERNAL ORGANS SEVEN LEAGUES. TEAR LIMB FROM LIMB, SONOZAKI, EAT THE INTESTINES. EVERYONE WITHIN TEN LEAGUES KNOWS.

CHAPTER 11
DEMON

THE VILLAGERS WERE FEARED AND REVERED BY THE VILLAGES AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN AS HALF-MAN HALF-DEMON IMMORTALS.

HINAMIZAWA USED TO BE CALLED ONIGAFUCHI.

RUMORS SPREAD: "A FILTHY GERM SPREADS THROUGH HINAMIZAWA." "IF YOU WANDER INTO HINAMIZAWA, YOU'LL BE DEMONED AWAY AND EATEN."

AND PEOPLE THREW ROCKS AT THE VILLAGE CHILDREN.

BUT AT THE END OF THE MEIJI ERA, THEY STARTED TO LOSE THAT MYSTIQUE.

THE VILLAGERS WERE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, AND THE VILLAGE WAS GROUNDLESSLY LABELED A WRECK OF AN ISOLATED VILLAGE FOR PATIENTS OF INCURABLE DISEASES.

THE VILLAGE WAS ON THE VERGE OF DESTRUCTION. BUT EVEN HINAMIZAWA GOT ITS MEN BACK, AND THE VILLAGE GAINED MOMENTUM WITH EFFORTS TO REBUILD.

THEN CAME THE END OF THE WAR... WE COULD FEEL THE DAWN COMING TO END THE NIGHT OF DISCRIMINATION.

THEY USED THAT MYSTIQUE TO SCARE THE PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGES BELOW AND DEMAND OFFERINGS OF THEM.

WE MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT IT UPON OURSELVES. OUR ANCESTORS TOOK PRIDE IN HAVING DEMON BLOOD FLOWING THROUGH THEIR VEINS.

EVEN MARRIAGE PROPOSALS WHERE ENGAGEMENT GIFTS HAD ALREADY BEEN EXCHANGED WOULD BE SCRAPPED.

ONCE EMPLOYERS FOUND OUT ANYONE WAS FROM ONIGAFUCHI VILLAGE, THAT PERSON WAS REFUSED WORK EVERYWHERE.

SOUHEI HAD BEEN DEPLOYED ON MAINLAND CHINA. WHEN THEY WITHDREW, HE CONSPIRED WITH HIS COMRADES AND SUPERIOR OFFICERS AND STOLE CANNED FOODS FROM THE MILITARY.

HE SOLD THEM ON THE BLACK MARKET AT A HIGH PRICE.

THAT WAS MY GRANDFATHER, SOUHEI SONOZAKI, HUSBAND OF THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

WHILE THAT WAS GOING ON, A VILLAGER APPEARED WHO HAD AMASSED A FORTUNE ON THE BLACK MARKET.

THAT FORTUNE WAS A BIG HELP IN RESTORING HINAMIZAWA.

SOUHEI GAVE THE FULL AMOUNT TO HIS WIFE, THE HEAD OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

A MAN CLAIMING TO HAVE BEEN SOUHEI'S SUPERIOR OFFICER CONFESSED. HE SAID THAT IT WAS HUMAN MEAT IN THOSE CANS...!

HE WAS SUSPECTED OF *"CANNING HUMAN FLESH."*

BUT AROUND 1955, AN ADVERSE WIND BEGAN TO BLOW AGAIN.

WITH THAT MONEY THE VILLAGERS SUCCEEDED IN ONE ENTERPRISE AFTER ANOTHER, AND THOSE WHO SUCCEEDED DIDN'T HOLD ANY AID BACK FROM THOSE WHO WOULD FOLLOW.

HINAMIZAWA WAS RESTORED, AND THE SONOZAKI FAMILY WERE LAUDED AS HEROES OF THE HINAMIZAWA RESTORATION.

SOUHEI DENIED THAT IT WAS HUMAN MEAT THROUGH HIS LAST YEARS.

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS REALLY INSIDE THE CANS THAT SOUHEI BROUGHT HOME.

AND THEY WERE DOING RESEARCH ON WAYS TO HANDLE HUMANS AS FOOD.

DURING THE WAR, SOUHEI WAS DOING MENIAL LABOR AT THE MILITARY'S MEDICAL INSTITUTION.

MY GRAND-MOTHER, THE HEAD OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY, TOLD THE VILLAGE CHILDREN:

THEY STARTED TO SCORN THE VILLAGERS AGAIN!

BUT PEOPLE WHO WERE JEALOUS OF HINAMIZAWA'S SUDDEN RESTORATION CALLED US BEASTS WHO BUILT A FORTUNE SELLING HUMAN MEAT.

"IF EIGHT PEOPLE CHASE AFTER YOU WITH CLUBS, SIXTEEN OF YOU CHASE AFTER THEM.

"IF ONE PERSON THROWS ROCKS AT YOU, TWO OF YOU THROW ROCKS BACK.

"IF A THOUSAND ATTACK YOU, FACE THEM TOGETHER WITH EVERYONE IN HINAMIZAWA."

"IF TWO PEOPLE THROW ROCKS AT YOU, FOUR OF YOU THROW ROCKS BACK.

WAS THAT IN MEMORY OF THEIR PAINFUL HISTORY...?

WHEN I GOT MIXED UP WITH THOSE PUNKS IN OKINOMIYA, THE VILLAGERS SAVED ME.

...THAT'S A FAIRY TALE.

SU (STAND)

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD STORY OF OYASHIRO-SAMA!?

WHY THE DISCRIMINATION? WHY CAN'T EVERYONE JUST GET ALONG!?

...WHY?

SO...YOU STARTED CAUSING OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE YOURSELVES?

...THEIR MEDIATOR, OYASHIRO-SAMA, NEVER DID.

EVEN IF PEOPLE AND DEMONS REALLY EXIST...

THAT IS OUR DEAREST WISH AS DESCENDANTS OF ONIGAFUCHI VILLAGE...

...AND THE DESTINY OF THE ONE WHO INHERITS THE "DEMON" OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

TO MAKE HINAMIZAWA VILLAGE INTO SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE REVERED LIKE ONIGAFUCHI VILLAGE WAS.

IT'S OKAY MII-CHAN. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOW US.

THANK YOU...

THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS THESE PAST FIVE YEARS... THERE ARE SOME THAT I WAS INVOLVED IN DIRECTLY, AND SOME INDIRECTLY.

I THINK I WAS AT THE CENTER OF ALL OF THEM...

WE IN THE SONOZAKI FAMILY HAVE HAD A TRADITION FOR GENERATIONS OF INCLUDING THE CHARACTER FOR "DEMON" IN THE FAMILY HEADS' NAMES.

THERE'S A DEMON IN THE "MI" IN MION...

"IN-HERITS THE DEMON"?

AND IT'S NOT ONLY THE NAME.

SU (TOUCH)

THE DEMON IS CARVED INTO MY BODY.

YOU KILLED THEM, DIDN'T YOU?

BUT, MII-CHAN— RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO-CHAN...

I HAVE FIRM CONVICTION IN WHAT I'VE DONE, AND I DON'T HAVE ANY SENSE OF GUILT OVER IT.

ZUZU (SLIDE)

...BUT YOU KILLED RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO-CHAN, MII-CHAN...!

I WON'T SAY IT'S OKAY TO KILL OTHER PEOPLE...

IT WAS MOST DEFINITELY MION SONOZAKI HERSELF.

BUT IT WASN'T THE DEMON WHO DID ANY OF IT.

I WON'T MAKE EXCUSES... THERE'S A DEMON LIVING INSIDE ME...

BUT YOU SAVED ONE PERSON, MII-CHAN.

YOU DIDN'T KILL KEIICHI-KUN.

NOW WHY DID I DO THAT? EVEN I, THE DEMON, CAN'T GUESS.

MAYBE THERE WAS SOME REASON THE MION SIDE OF ME DIDN'T WANT TO KILL HIM.

I'D LIKE YOU TO LISTEN TO ONE LAST SELFISH REQUEST.

MII-CHAN, WILL YOU TURN YOURSELF IN? OOISHI-SAN IS WAITING OUTSIDE.

I JUST NEED THIRTY MINUTES. LET ME BE ALONE WITH KEI-CHAN...

I WONDER WHY...

WHY WAS MII-CHAN FORCED TO INHERIT THE DEMON?

IT PROBABLY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN HELPED...

...I JUST FEEL...

...SO SORRY FOR HER...

BUT ...

OH...

I THINK SHION LIKED YOU TOO, KEI-CHAN.

HEY.

YOU AND SHION WERE CLOSE, WEREN'T YOU?

THAT'S WHAT WE WERE LIKE...

YOU COULDN'T MEASURE OUR RELATION-SHIP ON A SCALE ACCORD-ING TO HOW WELL WE GOT ALONG

MY RIGHT AND LEFT HANDS? THEY'RE NOT SOMETHING YOU REALLY TALK ABOUT GETTING ALONG OR NOT...

I DON'T KNOW.

DO YOU THINK YOUR RIGHT AND LEFT HANDS GET ALONG, KEI-CHAN?

I THINK THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THAT KIND OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE POTHOLDER, YOU WON'T HESITATE TO PUT IT ON YOUR DOMINANT HAND, RIGHT?

JUST LIKE YOU HAVE A DOMINANT HAND, ONE HAND IS CLEARLY SUPERIOR TO THE OTHER.

I THINK IT'S JUST THAT YOU'RE TOO CLOSE TO THE SITUATION TO SEE IT.

MION ...?

AND THAT YOU DID GET ALONG.

BUT NO ONE WOULD SAY THAT THEY DON'T NEED THEIR LEFT HAND JUST BECAUSE OF THAT.

IT'S THAT KIND OF COMPLI-CATED RELATION-SHIP.

I KEPT HER LOCKED UP, THINKING I WOULD GIVE HER THE CRUELEST DEATH OF ALL.

BUT I COULDN'T THINK OF WHAT IT WOULD BE UNTIL TODAY.

HA (GASP!)

REALLY!?

...IS STILL ALIVE.

SHION...

I WANT YOU TO SEE ALL OF MY CRIMES.

COME ON.

SUU (BECKON)

KUSHA (RUFFLE)

WHATEVER I MAY SEE...

AND ACCEPTING THE CRIMES MION COMMITTED.

THAT WOULD MEAN... ACCEPTING RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO'S DEATHS.

BUT IT MIGHT BE THE MOST PAINFUL THING YOU'LL EVER SEE, KEI-CHAN.

YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND, MION.

I'M A DEMON; I DON'T UNDERSTAND HUMAN FEELINGS ANYMORE.

BUT I THINK I CAN REALLY FEEL THAT MION LOVED YOU.

ZAZA (RUSTLE)

GIIII (CREEEEAK)

URK.

KACHI (CLICK)

PAM FLASH

THOSE WERE ALL MADE TO ENFORCE THE STRICT PRECEPTS OF ONIGAFUCHI VILLAGE.

TO MAKE EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO BROKE THE PRECEPTS, BRUTALLY KILLING THEM.

YOU SAW THE INSIDE OF THE SAIGUDEN, RIGHT? THE MOUNTAIN OF TORTURE DEVICES.

KO KO (CLACK)

SO THE SONOZAKI FAMILY MADE THIS.

ORIGINALLY, THE WARNING CEREMONY, THE COTTON DRIFTING, WAS RUN BY THE THREE FAMILIES.

KO KO

BUT WITH THE DECLINE OF THE KIMIYOSHI AND FURUDE FAMILIES, AND WITH THE CHANGE IN TIMES, IT BECAME HARD TO PERFORM THE CEREMONY.

SO THAT THE COTTON DRIFTING COULD BE PERFORMED EVEN IN MODERN TIMES...

...IN THIS SECRET PLACE.

BATAN ISLAND

SOME OF THEM WERE ACTUALLY BROUGHT HERE FROM THE SAIGUDEN.

?

HA (GASP)

WE HAVE ALL KINDS OF THINGS, SEE?

NO...

I KILLED THEM ALL RIGHT HERE.

THE COTTON DRIFTING IS A SHOW, TO MAKE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE. THERE'S NO POINT IF THERE'S NO AUDIENCE.

FOR WATCHING.

I SUPPOSE THERE WAS ONE AUDIENCE MEMBER.

BUT I PERFORMED THE COTTON DRIFTING BEAUTIFULLY.

THERE WASN'T ANY AUDIENCE TO WATCH.

WHERE IS EVERY-ONE...?

.....
.....

I DIDN'T WANT TO GET BUGS, SO I THREW THEM IN THE WELL.

I'M SORRY ...

ME.

THE DEMON THAT IS ME WATCHED THE ENTIRE TIME AS MION PERFORMED THE COTTON DRIFTING.

THAT MION IS THE BEST FRIEND YOU COULD EVER HAVE.

CALM DOWN, KEIICHI

GUH (CLENCH)

GATA (CLATTER)

KEI-CHAN...

YOU SAID IT YOUR-SELF.

IS THAT YOU, KEI-CHAN!?

KEI-CHAN...!

HA (GASP)

SHION!?

KEI-CHAN!

KEI-CHAN...

IT'S OKAY NOW.

KEI-CHAN...

!!

SHION! IT'S OVER NOW!

DON'T KILL ANY MORE PEOPLE!!

MION... YOU TELL HER TOO...

I'M THE ONE YOU HATE!! KILL ME!!

NOOOOOOOO!

NOOOO!!
RUUUUN!!

BACHI
(CRACKLE)

AAAAH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

BATSUN (ZAP)

DOSA (THUD)

YOU FIRST, KEI-CHAN! YOU'RE MINCE MEAT!!

HEH... HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH ...

+4

HEH-HEH-HEH. NOW, HOW SHALL I COOK YOU?

I'LL START BY POUNDING A NAIL INTO THE TOP JOINT OF THE LITTLE FINGER OF YOUR LEFT HAND. I'LL GO IN ORDER TO YOUR THUMB, THEN I'LL GO BACK TO YOUR LITTLE FINGER AND NAIL THE CENTER.

WHEN I'M DONE, I'LL GO ON TO YOUR RIGHT HAND...AND WHEN I'M DONE WITH THAT...HEH-HEH-HEH.

STOP! ONEE!!

GASHA (RATTLE)

DON'T KILL KEI-CHAN!!

GASHA

YOUR FORCED BRAVADO GAVE ME THE CREEPS.

HEH-HEH- HEH. I REALLY LIKE YOUR VOICE WHEN YOU CRY.

M-MION-NEESAMA! PLEASE!

I DON'T CARE HOW YOU KILL ME, BUT PLEASE, SPARE KEI-CHAN!

KA (CLICK)

KA

Y-YES...

THANK YOU SO MUCH. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

THEN APOLOGIZE LIKE YOUR SISTER TOLD YOU TO!

GIRI (GRIND)

YOUR SISTER WILL GIVE YOU A SPECIAL LESSON ON HOW TO APOLOGIZE SO THAT IT REACHES HER.

I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE LISTENING TO YOUR WISHES BEFORE.

BUT YOU'RE JUST SO ENTERTAINING WHEN YOU CRY, I'M STARTING TO WANT TO.

(GAH WHACK)

UNNGH ...

GUGU (GRRR ND)

PIKU (TWITCH)

NGH.

SHION...

MI...ON...

...AM A VILE, LOWLY SOW, WORTH LESS THAN THE DUST AT MION-NEESAMA'S FEET.

I...I, SHION SONOZAKI...

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.

GOOD, GOOD, KEEP IT UP. I'M STARTING TO THINK I MIGHT FORGIVE YOU A LITTLE.

WH-WHEN I THINK OF THE C-COUNTLESS OFFENSES I'VE MADE AGAINST MY SISTER, FORGETTING MY PLACE...

I WAS SURE THIS WAS MION UNTIL A LITTLE WHILE AGO.

SO PLEASE... ONLY KILL ME...

...AND I PLEDGE MY LIFE AND LOYALTY... TO M-MION-NEESAMA...

I'M SORRY FOR MY INSO-LENCE...

BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE SHE TURNED INTO SOMEONE THAT'S NOT MION...!!

HA HA HA HA HA!

AH HA HA HA HA

NOOOOO!!

N-

RELAX! I'LL MAKE SURE TO KILL YOU!

AFTER LETTING YOU HEAR PLENTY OF KEI-CHAN'S SCREAMS!!

THIS GIRL ISN'T MION!!

CUT IT OUT.

I LIED TO YOU EARLIER.

WHEN I TOLD YOU THAT I HADN'T THOUGHT OF HOW TO KILL SHION THE MOST CRUELLY.

JARI (CRUNCH)

FINALLY AWAKE?

THAT WAS A LIE.

I PLANNED TO LET HER HEAR PLENTY OF SCREAMS FROM ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO DIED BECAUSE OF HER...

...THEN KILL HER! HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH.

HMM...?

KUSU (SNICKER)

NO YOU'RE NOT.

HUH? I'M MION.

WHO ARE YOU...?

...WHO AM I?

THEN IF I'M NOT MION...

A DEMON.

EH?

YOU'RE NOT MION!

GIVE BACK THE MION WHO I WAS WITH EARLIER!

WAIT, ARE YOU OKAY? HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY FROM FEAR?

QUIET, DEMON!!

MION!

DON'T LOSE TO A STUPID DEMON!

MION!!

AAAH-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

MION!!

WHY?

HA HA!

WHY...!?

WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN ...?

KEI-CHAN... YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY...?

...KUH... WHY...

MION...

IT WAS A VERY LONG TIME AGO THAT THE DEMON CAME TO LIVE INSIDE ME.

THE DEMON ATE AWAY AT ME AND TRIED TO SPUR ME TO VIOLENCE, BUT I HELD IT BACK WITH SENSE AND REASON.

I THOUGHT I HAD QUIETED THE DEMON AND IT HAD GONE AWAY SOMEWHERE.

IT WAS ONLY SLEEPING INSIDE ME.

BUT THE TRUTH WAS DIFFERENT.

AND A LITTLE THING CAUSED THE DEMON TO AWAKEN.

IT WAS ...

POTA (DRIP)

DO YOU REMEMBER?

THE DOLL YOU GOT ON THE DAY OF THE GAME TOURNAMENT.

...BECAUSE OF YOU.

...MAYBE THINGS WOULDN'T HAVE GONE CRAZY.

IF YOU HAD GIVEN THE DOLL TO ME BACK THEN...

BUT SINCE THEN, THINGS KEPT FALLING, LIKE DOMINOES, AND I COULDN'T CONTROL IT ANYMORE.

OF COURSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, KEI-CHAN.

YOU'RE KIDDING... RIGHT...?

I THOUGHT THAT I HAD LEARNED FROM RENA AND APOLOGIZED.

BUT THE ONE I APOLOGIZED TO...

I DREAM OF WHEN YOU FIGURE IT OUT ON YOUR OWN AND GO TO APOLOGIZE.

AH...

IT WASN'T MION...!

...WAS SHION!

...I WAS GOING TO APOLOGIZE.

AND I SAID THAT TODAY...

UNNGH

URRRGH

AAAAAAAAUUGH!!

BUT I HAVEN'T GIVEN A WORD OF APOLOGY ABOUT THAT!!

DO YOU REALLY MEAN THAT?

PIKU (TWITCH)

IF THAT WOULD QUIET MION'S DEMON.

NOW, ARE YOU READY? I'M ABOUT TO GET STARTED.

YES... IN EXCHANGE, PROMISE ME TWO THINGS.

SO YOU... DON'T THINK OF BEGGING FOR YOUR LIFE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

WHEN YOU'VE HURT ME UNTIL YOU'RE SATISFIED, FORGIVE SHION.

THE OTHER PROMISE IS, YOU DISAPPEAR ONCE YOU'RE SATISFIED.

GIVE THAT BODY... BACK TO MION.

MI (GRIN)

...CAN I CHANGE MY PROMISES FROM TWO TO THREE?

MAKE THE THIRD ONE NOT TO KILL ME.

THAT'S TOO BAD...

YOU SAID TWO AT THE BEGINNING. YOU DON'T GET ANY MORE.

HA...

HA HA HA HA!

HEH HEH HEH

GUH (STIFFEN)

NOW DO IT.

WELL, THEN THERE'LL BE NOTHING ANYBODY CAN DO.

...I PROBABLY WON'T KEEP THOSE PROMISES, YOU KNOW?

I'M A DEMON, AFTER ALL.

KEI-CHAN.

KOTO (CLUNK)

SU (BRUSH)

I COULD GRANT YOUR *THIRD* WISH.

EH?

YOUR FIRST WISH— TO SAVE SHION.

THAT'S NO LONGER POSSIBLE.

THE DEMON WILL KILL SHION. THAT'S ALREADY BEEN SET; I CAN'T STOP IT.

AND YOUR SECOND WISH—

TO GIVE THIS BODY BACK TO MION.

...THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE TOO.

TODAY WAS THE CUT-OFF DATE. MION WON'T EVER COME BACK.

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!

SHE'LL NEVER COME BACK...?

SU (POINT)

DO YOU HEAR THAT SOUND...?

DOOON (BOOOOM)

ドオン

DOOON

ドオン

DON'T SAY THOSE SAD THINGS!

AFTER TODAY, I MAY LOOK LIKE ME, BUT THAT WILL BE A DEMON WITH MY FORM...

OOISHI WILL BE HERE SOON, SO BEAR WITH IT A LITTLE.

I'M GOING TO PUT YOU TO SLEEP FOR A WHILE, KEI-CHAN.

(SIGH) (ZZZZ)

GUH (CLENCH)

RENA MUST HAVE CALLED OOISHI BECAUSE WE DIDN'T COME BACK.

THE POLICE ARE TRYING TO BREAK IN.

DOOON BOOOOM

DOOON

I'M SORRY ...

...FOR DEFILING MION.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, THE MION IN MY HEART WON'T CHANGE.

BUT FORGET ME...

IF YOU SEE ME AFTER TODAY, DON'T APPROACH ME.

BECAUSE I'LL BE THE DEMON POSSESSING MY CORPSE.

SLI (MOVE)

MION...
MION...

JUNE, 1983

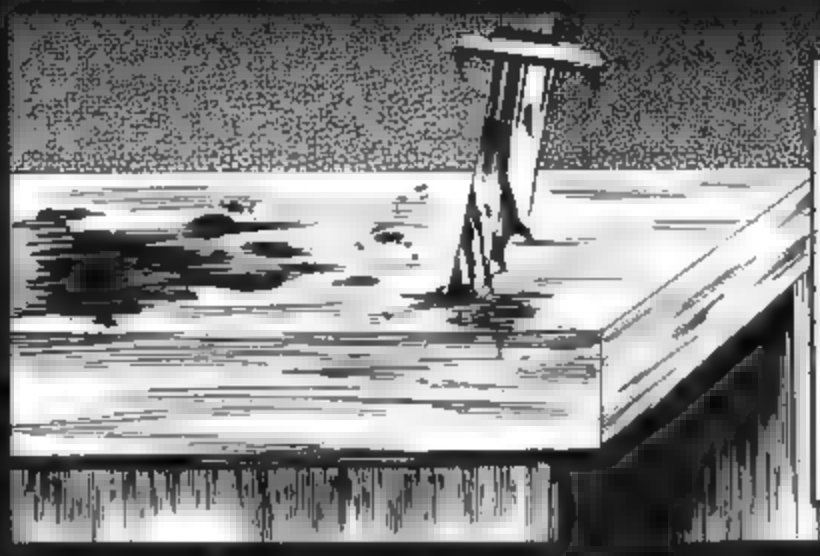
A SERIES OF DISAPPEARANCES OCCURS IN HINAMIZAWA VILLAGE, MUNICIPALITY OF SHISHIBONE, XX PREFECTURE.

THE SUSPECT IS MION SONOZAKI (AGE 17) SHE IS SUSPECTED OF KIDNAPPING, CONFINING, AND KILLING FIVE RESIDENTS OF HINAMIZAWA VILLAGE (ORYOU SONOZAKI, SHION SONOZAKI, KIICHIROU KIMIYOSHI, RIKA FURUDE, SATOKO HOJO) BETWEEN THE 20TH AND 22ND OF JUNE.

FINAL CHAPTER
THE LAST WISH

AFTERNOON OF THE 23RD POLICE CARS PATROLLING THE SONOZAKI RESIDENCE HEARD SCREAMS INSIDE AND MADE AN EMERGENCY BREAK-IN.

THEY TOOK THE SUSPECT'S MISSING SISTER (SHION SONOZAKI) AND TWO OF HER CLASSMATES (KEIICHI MAEBARA, REINA RYUGU) INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY.



HAIR, SKIN, AND BLOOD FROM FOUR OF THE MISSING PERSONS (ORYOU SONOZAKI, KIICHIROU KIMIYOSHI, RIKA FURUDE, SATOKO HOJO) WERE FOUND IN AN UNDERGROUND TORTURE CHAMBER DETACHED FROM THE MAIN SONOZAKI ESTATE, BUT THEIR BODIES HAVE YET TO BE FOUND.

FURTHERMORE, HER PART IN THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS OF RECENT YEARS IS STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION, BUT NO EVIDENCE HAS BEEN DISCOVERED PROVING MION SONOZAKI'S DIRECT OR INDIRECT INVOLVEMENT.

THE SUSPECT IS STILL AT LARGE.

ZAH (STEP)

DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE INCIDENT.

BUT SHE HAD SUSTAINED DEEP EMOTIONAL WOUNDS.

SHION HAD NO EXTERNAL INJURIES.

AFTER THAT, OOISHI-SAN AND THE OTHERS RAN TO THE SCENE AND RESCUED SHION AND ME.

A HOSPITAL WOULD BE STUPID, AND SHE DIDN'T WANT TO GO HOME, SO THEY SAY SHE STAYS SHUT UP IN A CERTAIN PLACE IN SHISHIBONE.

ACCORDING TO WHAT SHE TOLD US, EVERY SINGLE SHADOW SHE SAW LOOKED LIKE MION.

AND MION STILL...

...HASN'T BEEN FOUND.

BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T FOUND THE VICTIMS' BODIES.

THE POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING THE UNDERGROUND TORTURE CHAMBER, EVEN NOW.

THAT PROBABLY MEANS THERE'S A VERTICAL, WELL-SHAPED TUNNEL HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THAT UNDERGROUND.

I'M SURE MION...

...SAID SHE'D THROWN THE BODIES IN THE WELL.

MION (CHUMMO)

OH. SO YOU'RE MOVING AWAY.

IN THE END...I WON'T EVEN HAVE BEEN IN HINAMIZAWA FOR SIX MONTHS.

...I'LL MISS YOU...

I WON'T FORGET...

I WON'T FORGET HINAMIZAWA...

...FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

MION... WHERE DID YOU GO...?

HERE I BOUGHT THIS DOLL, JUST FOR YOU.

SOME-TIMES I GET TO THINKING.

KUSHA (RUFFLE)

MAYBE YOU DIDN'T RUN AWAY BUT WERE DEMONED AWAY.

WHERE DID YOU DISAPPEAR TO...?

I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER...

I'M SURE RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO ARE WAITING FOR YOU THERE.

AND THE THREE OF YOU HAVE CLUB ACTIVITIES EVERY DAY...

... WAITING FOR ME AND RENA TO JOIN YOU.

A PLACE WHERE...

WHER-EVER YOU DISAP-PEARED TO...

...YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OF THOSE ANNOYING FAMILY OBLIGATIONS...

...I HOPE THERE'S A HOBBY SHOP THERE THAT WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY.

...AND YOU CAN HAVE FUN NOT AS MION SONOZAKI, BUT JUST MION.

IF I SEE YOU...

IF ... ...I EVER SEE YOU...

THEN...

WHEN I DO...

THIS TIME...

...I WILL GIVE YOU THIS DOLL.

SO...

SO YOU'D BETTER ...

BUT...

...TAKE IT WITHOUT MAKING FUN OF ME...

...IN THE END, YOU'LL TURN BRIGHT RED AND TAKE IT FROM ME...

I KNOW YOU. YOU'LL PROBABLY BE ALL STUBBORN AND SAY YOU DON'T WANT IT.

BACK THEN, I...

...WAS SO EMBARRASSED TO THINK OF YOU AS A GIRL.

I FELT LIKE IF I GAVE YOU THE DOLL...

...SOMETHING WOULD CHANGE...

I WAS AFRAID THAT...

...WE'D STOP BEING ABLE TO LAUGH AND GOOF OFF TOGETHER LIKE WE DID BEFORE.

I WAS SO SCARED OF THAT.

I'LL NEVER ...

...HURT YOU AGAIN.

SO PLEASE ...!

KON (WHACK)

KON

BA
(BAM)

DA
(STAMP)

DA

DA

DA

DA

BA
(RUSH

TA—
(RUN)

Ah-ha-ha. Long time no see. How've you been?

SHOULD YOU BE WANDERING AROUND OUT HERE LIKE THIS?
...WELL, I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ONE LAST TIME.
UGH DO YOU REALIZE THE POLICE ARE AFTER YOU?
I REALLY. EH-HEH-HEH.

GAKU (DROP)

MION !?

AH HA...

HAA...

BAH (JUMP)

I-I...

IT'S OVER FOR ME.

THEY'RE COMING TO GET ME. THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND ME. HA-HA... HA-HA-HA.

OH YEAH, I...

...HAVE SOMETHING I WANT TO GIVE YOU...

ARE YOU OKAY!? DON'T PUSH YOURSELF!

BAH (DROP)

IF YOU SEE ME AFTER TODAY, DON'T APPROACH ME.

MI...

...O...

BECAUSE I'LL BE THE DEMON POSSESSING MY CORPSE

ZUIRU (SLIDE)

I'M A DEMON, AFTER ALL...

I'M... A DEMON...

I MADE IT...

YORO (STAGGER)

HUFF... HUFF.

I MADE IT.

HA HA HA HA HOO HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

NOW I'VE KILLED EVERY-ONE I WANTED TO KILL!!!

THE DOLL.

THE DOLL I BOUGHT...

...FOR MION...

JIWA OOZE)

I FINALLY GOT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

NO... MION...

IT'S GOT BLOOD ON IT.

I WIPE AT IT...

...AND WIPE AT IT...

BUT IT ONLY...

...GETS DIRTIER.

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BASA (RUSTLE)

UH...

UM...

ARGH, MAN...

EH...? BUT...

MOM, I'M SORRY, BUT WOULD YOU PUT SOME WATER IN THE VASE?

JUST, PLEASE!

YES...

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE YOU HAVE A SON IN HIS TEENS. NN-FU-FU.

HELLO THERE, MRS. MAEBARA.

YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER.

THE DOCTOR SAYS I'M RECOVERING ALL RIGHT AFTER THE SURGERY.

BUT WHEN I SEE YOUR FACE, I FEEL LIKE THE WOUND'LL GET WORSE AGAIN.

NA-HA-HA! HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

DON (BOOM)

I THOUGHT THESE WOULD BE QUITE THE NECESSITY FOR A HEALTHY YOUNG MAN SHUT UP IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!

NN-FU-FU. I BROUGHT YOU A WONDERFUL GIFT; I HOPE IT IMPROVES YOUR MOOD.

IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, YOU'D ONLY DEVELOP A FETISH FOR NURSES! YOU SHOULDN'T PICK A FAVORITE NOW— BRANCH OUT! YOU NEED TO BE WELL-ROUNDED. ♡

KAAAA (BLUUUSH)

P-P-PLEASE DON'T BRING ME PORN MAGAZINES!!

THE NIGHT MION STABBED ME...

...SHION FELL FROM THE BALCONY OF THE APARTMENT SHE WAS STAYING IN...AND DIED.

.....
.....

IT REALLY IS A PITY ABOUT SHION-SAN.

THE POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING EVERY POSSIBILITY— ACCIDENT, SUICIDE, HOMICIDE.

THERE'S NO WAY IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...

IT WAS MION...I KNOW IT WAS...!

THE GUYS IN FORENSICS ARE SAYING IT HAD TO BE SUICIDE, BUT I AGREE WITH YOU, MAEBARA-SAN.

SHE PUSHED SHION-SAN AND THEN STABBED YOU, ALL IN ONE NIGHT.

OH, RIGHT. THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU TODAY.

SO YOU HAVEN'T FOUND MION YET?

WHAT!?

ZUKI (STING)

OWWW.

ACTUALLY, WE HAVE FOUND HER.

NOT ONLY THAT. WE FOUND THE HIDDEN WELL UNDER THE SONOZAKI HOUSE.

AND WE DISCOVERED THE BODIES OF ALL THE MISSING PERSONS AT THE BOTTOM.

A VERTICAL TUNNEL DUG IN A WELL SHAPE WITH A LADDER IN IT, AND WHEN WE WENT AAAAAAALL THE WAY TO THE BOTTOM, THERE WAS A HORIZONTAL TUNNEL.

IT WAS CLEVERLY HIDDEN IN THAT BASEMENT.

GYU (CLENCH)

I...

...SEE...

AFTER CRAWLING ALONG FOR A FEW HUNDRED METERS, WE CAME OUT ONTO AN OLD WELL IN THE MOUNTAINS.

THEY HAD ALL BEEN THROWN UNCEREMONI-OUSLY INTO IT.

YES... MUDDY WATER HAD COLLECTED EVEN FARTHER DOWN BELOW THE ESCAPE ROUTE.

AND EVERYONE'S BODIES...

WERE AT THE BOTTOM...?

OH, YES. THIS IS A LITTLE OFF-TOPIC, BUT YOU KNOW RIKA FURUDE-SAN, DON'T YOU?

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WE FOUND HUMAN BONES THAT TRACED BACK TO A TIME OF DEATH MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO—OF AT LEAST THREE PEOPLE.

THEY MUST BE FROM THE DARK SIDE OF HINAMIZAWA'S HISTORY.

DID SHE EVER TALK ABOUT ANY-THING LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE... TAKING REGU-LAR INSULIN SHOTS FOR DIABETES OR ANYTHING?

EH?

ACTUALLY, WE FOUND A SYRINGE IN HER SKIRT POCKET.

BUT IT WAS DAMAGED, SO WE COULDN'T DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC DRUG INSIDE.

I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT THAT...

I SEE.

THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY'S MAIN BUSINESS DEALS WITH A KIND OF STIMULANT...

I THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY.

ARE YOU SAYING THAT RIKA-CHAN'S A DRUG ADDICT!?

NO, NO. IT'S JUST...

...THAT IT'S A LITTLE STRANGE THAT SHE WOULD HAVE BROUGHT A SYRINGE WITH HER WHILE GOING TO GET SOY SAUCE.

BAH! (BOLT)

WHAT'S GOING ON?

NOTHING'S MAKING SENSE...

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

...TO MION RIGHT NOW?

UM... OOISHI-SAN.

...I WANT YOU TO ANSWER ME HONESTLY, MAEBARA-SAN.

BEFORE I TELL YOU... THERE'S ONE THING...

WHAT IS IT?

BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T GIVE ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER, IT COULD BE SEEN AS INTERFERING WITH OUR INVESTIGATION.

I WANT A SERIOUS, HONEST ANSWER.

DON'T MAKE ME KEEP REPEAT-ING IT!

IT WAS MION! MION SONOZAKI !!

THEN WHO WAS IT THAT STABBED YOU?

I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE BUT MION.

MAEBARA-SAN. WHO DO YOU THINK PUSHED SHION-SAN OFF THE BALCONY?

YOU JUST SAID YOURSELF THAT MION DID IT, OOISHI-SAN!!

SHE PUSHED SHION AND STABBED ME...

IN OTHER WORDS, HE ONLY HEARD IT THROUGH THE WALL.

THIS NEIGHBOR OF HERS IS A MEMBER OF THEIR GANG.

IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS SHION'S BODYGUARD.

MY BASIS FOR SAYING THAT MION KILLED SHION IS A TESTIMONY FROM HER NEIGHBOR.

HA-HA-HA... ACTUALLY...

...THAT THE NOISE HE HEARD IN THE NEXT ROOM WAS JUST LIKE THE SISTERS' QUARRELS HE HAD OFTEN HEARD IN THE PAST.

GATA (CLATTER)

GATA

THIS MAN TESTI-FIED...

THE DISTURBANCE HAD QUIETED BY THE TIME THE MANAGER GOT THERE WITH THE KEY, BUT HE THOUGHT HE'D AT LEAST CHECK ON HER AND OPENED THE DOOR.

BUT THIS ONE WAS UNUSUALLY LONG, SO HE WENT TO HER ROOM TO GIVE HER A TRANQUIL-IZER.

...BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN SIMILAR DISTUR-BANCES EVERY NIGHT AT THE TIME.

AT FIRST, HE THOUGHT IT WAS A HALLUCINATION BROUGHT ON BY HER DERANGE-MENT AND LEFT HER ALONE...

NOT ONE PERSON WITNESSED MION SONOZAKI.

AND HE SAID IT MUST HAVE BEEN MION'S DOING...

WHEN HE DID, THE ROOM WAS A MESS, AND SHION'S BODY WAS UNDER THE BALCONY.

BECAUSE THE OTHER WITNESS, SHION-SAN, IS NO LONGER ALIVE.

...YOU ARE THE ONE AND ONLY PERSON WHO WITNESSED MION SONOZAKI THAT NIGHT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE IT TO KNOW IT WAS MION, DO YOU!?

KOTSU (CLACK) KOTSU

NOW, NOW. WHAT I'M SAYING IS...

FUU (WHEW)

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY, OOISHI-SAN...

YES...!

WERE YOU REALLY STABBED BY MION SONOZAKI?

ACTUALLY ...

...WE FOUND MION SONOZAKI AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL.

EH...?

AFTER SHE KNOCKED YOU OUT, SHE TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH THE HIDDEN TUNNEL IN THE WELL. AND WHILE SHE WAS CLIMBING DOWN THE LADDER, SHE MISSED A STEP AND FELL TO THE BOTTOM... WE GATHER SHE BROKE HER NECK AND DIED.

SHE HAD FALLEN TO HER DEATH.

IT WASN'T THAT SHE WENT BACK THERE AFTER ATTACKING YOU AND SHION-SAN.

BY THEN, SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD!

THE AUTOPSY CONFIRMED IT. THERE'S NO DOUBT SHE DIED ON THAT DAY.

TH-THAT...

THAT'S CRAZY.

THAT THE MION WHO STABBED ME...

I'M SURE...

NO...

...BUT IS NOT MION SONO-ZAKI.

SOMEONE WHO IS MION SONOZAKI ...

TH-THEN! WHO ATTACKED ME AND SHION!?

WHO!?

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW MIYO TAKANO-SAN DIED?

EH...? TAKANO-SAN?

WASN'T SHE BURNED TO DEATH DEEP IN THE MOUN-TAINS...?

NGH !!

WHO IS MION SONO-ZAKI...

...BUT ISN'T MION SONO-ZAKI...

BUT THIS IS WHERE IT GETS A LITTLE STRANGE.

WE'VE LEARNED THAT SHE WAS BURNED AFTER BEING HANGED.

THAT DIDN'T MATCH UP, SO APPARENTLY THEY PANICKED AND FALSIFIED THE REPORT TO SAY SHE HAD DIED THAT DAY.

HER FIRST AUTOPSY REPORTED THAT 24 HOURS HAD ELAPSED SINCE HER TIME OF DEATH.

...SEE MIYO TAKANO-SAN ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING?

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN ASKED THIS SEVERAL TIMES, BUT DID YOU...

...YES.

AND YOU SAW HER THE DAY BEFORE THAT, WHEN YOU WERE GETTING READY FOR THE FESTIVAL, RIGHT?

YES...

I SAW HER.

IF SHE HAD BEEN DEAD 24 HOURS ...

...THAT MEANS SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD THE EVENING BEFORE THE FESTIVAL.

SHE WAS ALIVE WHEN YOU WERE GETTING READY FOR THE FESTIVAL.

BUT BY THE TIME YOU SNUCK INTO THE SAIGUDEN, SHE WAS DEAD.

THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING.

WHAT STARTED IT ALL.

INVADING THE SAIGUDEN.

THE ONE WHO INSTIGATED IT...TAKANO-SAN...

WHEN SHE ASKED US TO GO INTO THE SAIGUDEN...

THERE ARE TOO MANY DEAD PEOPLE WALKING AROUND IN THIS CASE.

NA-HA-HA-HA!

...SHE WAS NO LONGER... A MEMBER OF THIS WORLD...

WELL, THEN...

BASA (RUSTLE)

IF YOU EVER WANT TO TALK IN THE FUTURE, YOU CAN CALL ME ANY TIME.

PISHA (SNAP)

A DEAD PERSON RAISED THE CURTAIN, AND A DEAD PERSON LET IT FALL...ON THIS CASE...

I'VE COME TO GET YOU...

KEI-CHAN.

NOTHING IS OVER IN THIS CASE.

IT'S STILL GOING ON.

IT'S STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO.

SOMEONE PLEASE PUT AN END TO THIS CASE.

THIS CRUEL, MISERABLE, SAD CASE...

PLEASE PUT AN END TO IT.

THAT IS MY ONLY WISH.

NOT THIS TIME! AH HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!

I GRANTED YOU ONE WISH THEN, DIDN'T I?

TRANSLATION NOTES

Page 13

Onigafuchi

Literally means "pit of demons"; a fitting name for a village infested with them.

Page 19

Wata

The Japanese words for "cotton" and "entrails" are both pronounced "*wata*," but are written with different Chinese characters.

Page 26

The Meiji and Shouwa Eras

The Meiji Era lasted from 1868 to 1912 when Emperor Meiji ruled Japan. During the Meiji Restoration, Japan started modernizing to catch up with the Western world in terms of technology, etc. after centuries of isolation. The Shouwa Era refers to Emperor Shouwa's reign in Japan from 1926-1989.

Page 92

Ojiichan

Ojiichan is a friendly way of addressing an elderly man.

Page 183

Inheriting the Demon

As Mion explains, each head of the Sonozaki family has the Chinese character for demon (鬼) in their name, as can be seen with the "mi" in Mion (魅).

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY

COTTON DRIFTING ARC

FIN

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"HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY"

ABOUT THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC"

VICIOUS TRAP

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI 07

I WROTE THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC" AS THE SECOND STORY AFTER THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC," AND I WROTE IT WITH THE EMPHASIS ON EXPLAINING THE SETTING OF HINAMIZAWA MORE DEEPLY. IT'S ALSO THE STORY THAT BEST DEPICTS THE MOOD OF DETECTIVE NOVELS FROM THE GOOD OLD DAYS AND, OF THE MANY "HIGURASHI" STORIES, IS ONE OF THE CREATOR'S OWN FAVORITES.

NOW THEN. AS FOR THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY OF THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC," THE CREATOR HAS STATED THAT "IT'S NOT AS DIFFICULT AS THE 'ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC,' BUT IT IS EXTREMELY VICIOUS," AND ESSENTIALLY, IT HAS THE LOWEST DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY OF ALL THE "HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY" STORIES. BUT, AS ALSO STATED, IT HAS A VICIOUS TRAP, AND IF IT HAPPENS TO GET YOU, YOU'RE IN DANGER OF VICIOUSLY FALLING INTO A PITFALL. AND THE SCARY THING ABOUT THIS TRAP IS THAT THOSE WHO FALL NEATLY INTO IT MAY NOT REALIZE THAT THEY'VE FALLEN INTO A TRAP.

PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOU WERE CAUGHT IN THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC"'S ANSWER STORY, THE "EYE OPENING ARC."

...IF ON THE OFF-CHANCE YOU HAPPEN TO LEARN THAT YOU WERE NEATLY CAUGHT IN THE TRAP...CONGRATULATIONS, YOU ENJOYED THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC" MORE THAN ANYONE (LAUGH).

Special Thanks

RYUKISHI07-SAMA
EDITOR-SAMA
KASHI MOCHIZUKI-CHAN
EKO SHIRAYUKI-CHAN
HIROMI ARASE-CHAN
KAMURA-CHAN
MAHIRO TAKANA-CHAN
EVERYONE WHO
SUPPORTED ME

AFTERWORD

HELLO. I'M YUTORI HOUJYOU, IN CHARGE OF THE ARTWORK.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS READ THIS FAR.

I AM TRULY HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO HAVE ENCOUNTERED "HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY" AND TO BE ABLE TO WORK ON THE MANGA VERSION. THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC" IS CONCLUDED, BUT "HIGURASHI" ISN'T OVER YET! I'M STARTING THE ANSWER ARC, THE "EYE OPENING ARC"!!

THAT PERSON AND THAT PERSON AND THAT PERSON, WHO WE ONLY CAUGHT GLIMPSES OF IN THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC," SHOW UP IN THE "EYE OPENING ARC," A STORY WITH A RARE FLASHBACK MIXED IN!

I'M GOING TO PUT ALL MY ENERGY INTO DRAWING THIS ONE TOO, SO PLEASE ENJOY IT.

WELL THEN, LET'S MEET IN THE "EYE OPENING ARC!"

YUTORI HOUJYOU

EXPOSE THE TRAGEDY!

1983, HINAMIZAWA VILLAGE ...

THE STAGE: 1982

ONE YEAR BEFORE KEIICHI MAEBARA TRANSFERRED TO HINAMIZAWA.

OYASHIRO'S CURSE, WITNESSED BY SHION SONOZAKI.

...AND...

WHAT IS THE TRUTH BEHIND THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS...!?

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

ART: YUTORI HOUJYOU

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY

EYE OPENING ARC

HIGURASHI
WHEN THEY CRY
COTTON DRIFTING ARC ❷

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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